the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 5, 2007

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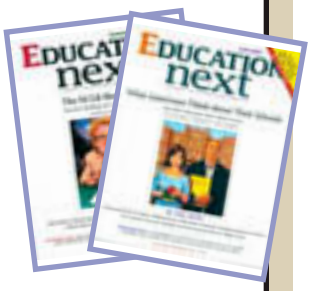

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—Robert M. Costrell and Michael Podgursky

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—Robert O. Slater

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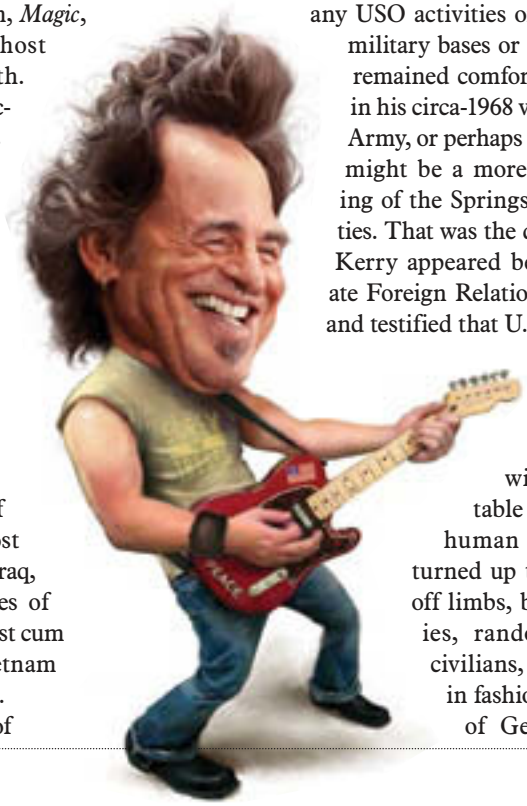
He's Not the Boss of Us

That Bruce Springsteen is not a fan of the present administration will not shock regular readers of THE SCRAPBOOK. He spent the closing hours of the 2004 campaign crooning with John Kerry by his side, desperately trying to push him over the top in Ohio. George W. Bush's presence haunts the Boss's new album, *Magic*, as Banquo's ghost haunted Macbeth. During the publicity blitz that has accompaniedthe album's release, Springsteen has repeatedly cited the left's tiresome laundry list of grievances—Bush's shredding of the Constitution, his ignoring of the Bill of Rights, and, most of all, his war in Iraq, which in the eyes of the military analyst cum rock star is Vietnam redux, only worse.



Springsteen, of course, didn't serve in the Vietnam-era army; his biographer Dave Marsh noted, "Springsteen beat the draft in the classic Sixties fashion. 'They gave me the forms and I checked everything. Even said I was a homo and all that.'" Nor has he in his three-and-a-half decades as a rock-and-roll star participated in any USO activities or gone to visit military bases or hospitals. He's remained comfortably ignorant in his circa-1968 view of the U.S. Army, or perhaps April 22, 1971, might be a more accurate dating of the Springsteen sensibilities. That was the day when John Kerry appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and testified that U.S. soldiers had "raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam."

Kerry's famous refrain "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" has inspired one of Springsteen's new songs, this one about the war in Iraq:

A downtown window flushed with light
Faces of the dead at five (faces of the dead at five)
A martyr's silent eyes
Petition the drivers as we pass by
Who'll be the last to die for a mistake?

The saving grace is that Springsteen's anachronistic political rants seem to serve as white noise, even to his diehard fans. When the *Toronto Star*'s Greg Quill reviewed Springsteen's recent Toronto show, effusively praising the concert and *Magic*'s political agenda, he noted that, "The new songs—all of them given specially dramatic lighting effects and video treatments on the large screens that hung on each side of the stage—prompted a mass sit-down" from a crowd that had stood through the rest of the show. Quill went on to speculate that the sit-down "perhaps denoted a form of worship or meditation." Or perhaps it just denoted boredom? ♦

JASON SEILER

Friends of Hillary

Where did Joseph Wilson turn when the right-wing smear machine maliciously attacked the retired ambassador for telling the truth about President Bush's rush to war in Iraq?

You're right. He wasn't telling the truth, and we don't care about Joe Wilson anymore, either. THE SCRAPBOOK asks because we do care about his interlocutors. Here is what Wilson himself said in a chat on a left-wing website.

"Two people in Washington helped us [Wilson and his wife, Valerie Plame] understand the broader implications of the fight we have found ourselves in: Sid Blumenthal, and Hillary Clinton." (No, we don't care about Sidney Blumenthal either.) "They had both been through the character assassination gauntlet, and were able to get us to see that the fight wasn't personal, however painful it might be, but was all about how we conduct public debate and discourse in our democracy. I cannot tell you how many times they told us to pull up our socks and quit feeling sorry for ourselves because the future of the country is what really matters. I am eternally grateful to both for their wisdom and their profound understanding of the pernicious threat posed by the forces of the far right. If you haven't read Sid's books . . . you really should. It is an honor for me that my dear friend is part of Valerie's day here with you. This has been a long battle, far longer for the Blumenthals and for the Clintons than for us, but bruising to all who have been subjected to the viciousness and the lies of the right. Very few have emerged from

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of November 9, 1998)

the fire tempered rather than broken by the experience. Thanks to Sid and Hillary, I think we have, and I think that is reflected in what you have already seen of Valerie's interviews."

What's that, Joe? "I cannot tell you how many times they told us to pull up our socks and quit feeling sorry for ourselves because the future of the country is really what matters." How many times, exactly? Byron York reported that Clinton and the Wilsons had dinner last spring, but pointed out on *National Review Online*: "Joe Wilson's words seem to suggest that she offered much more extensive counsel. It would be interesting to know more." Yes, it would.

Our question: When did Joe Wilson become politically acceptable again? Back in 2004, Wilson announced his support for John Kerry and Kerry embraced Wilson and his fight against the Bush administration. At one point, the Kerry campaign even set up a website to highlight Wilson's attacks on the Bush administration. But in July 2004, a unanimous, bipartisan report from the Senate Intelligence Committee left Wilson's credibility in tatters.

Here is how a news story in the *Washington Post* put it at the time:

> Former ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV, dispatched by the CIA in February 2002 to investigate reports that Iraq sought to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program with uranium from Africa, was specifically recommended for the mission by his wife, a CIA employee, contrary to what he has said publicly. . . . Wilson's assertions—both about what he found in Niger and what the Bush administration did with the information—were undermined yesterday in a bipartisan Senate intelligence committee report. The panel found that Wilson's report, rather than debunking intelligence about purported uranium sales to Iraq, as he has said, bolstered the case for most intelligence analysts. And contrary to Wilson's assertions and even the government's previous statements, the CIA did not tell the White House it had qualms about the reliability of the Africa intelligence that made its way into 16 fateful words in President Bush's January 2003 State of the Union address. . . .

Kerry's campaign quickly disappeared its pro-Wilson website and quietly distanced itself from the discredited "truth-teller."

Not Hillary. Maybe it was all of their commiserating over right-wing conspiracies or hobnobbing over dinner, but when Wilson endorsed Hillary Clinton for president back in July, the Democratic frontrunner was thrilled with the support.

"Joe Wilson has stood up to this administration and held it accountable for the misinformation that led us into the Iraq war," she said in a statement.

Given that Clinton is getting advice from Sandy Berger, who destroyed classified documents he took from the National Archives, one shouldn't be too surprised that she would welcome Wilson's support.

But just how much *did* Clinton support Wilson in his disinformation campaign against the Bush administration? It would indeed be interesting to know more. ♦

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Casual

Urbanities

New York is dead—that's what they said back in 1975. And 1929. And 1860. The city has died more times than you can count, and, like Nosferatu, it always manages to rise from its coffin. Not even the current mayor has been able to put a stake through its smoking heart.

No, New York isn't dead, exactly. It's just *dull*. The city has all the intellectual influence of Anchorage and the excitement of Sioux Falls. Broadway, the galleries, the dance troupes—the arts continue in New York, more or less of their own impetus. But for more than a hundred years, the city was also the intellectual capital of the nation, home of the public intellectuals. And it just isn't anymore.

Think of it this way: If you wanted to put new ideas into play, would you move to New York to do it? The *New York Review of Books*, *Commentary*, my own journal, *First Things*—they're in Manhattan. But that's for historical reasons, and few of their writers actually live there. It made sense to be in the city around 1959. But why bother now? New York is loud and dirty, the business costs are absurd, and, truth be told, there hasn't been a new idea, born of the city's shared culture, in more than a decade.

This all came clear to me last month on a trip to another city, where over five days I squeezed in visits with more than thirty authors and editors and thinkers—more than thirty people, in other words, concerned with public ideas: excited about their impact, interested in their interplay, determined to influence the nation's discourse and actually able to. New York has nothing similar to offer.

Unfortunately, that other city was Washington, D.C.—home of the Tidal Basin, where almost anything might wash up. Home of the Capitol, where almost anything does wash up. The center of America's public life has changed, over the years. The day in 1881 when William Dean Howells left the *Atlantic* in Boston and moved to *Harper's* in New York really did mark the end of one era and the beginning of another. So maybe Washington's rise, which many have noticed, is just the effect of a natural shift in culture. But there are so many nice cities in this county: real places, with real people. Poughkeepsie, for instance, or Albuquerque. Why, O Lord, do the public intellectuals have to go to Washington?

DARREN GYGI

Cities differ. You go out to eat in Boston, runs an old joke, and there's a good chance your waiter can name several characters from Dostoyevsky. You go out to eat in Washington, and there's a good chance your waiter can't name any characters from Dostoyevsky. You go out to eat in New York, and there's a good chance your waiter *is* a character from Dostoyevsky.

But maybe the *ideas* differ as well, when the center of national discourse is also the center of national politics. Those ideas get politicized in new and disturbing ways. America has kept separate, up till recently, the seat of its government and the center of its culture, and, on the whole, that's been a good thing. The dispersal of politics and public life has helped reinforce the national feeling that the political isn't what ultimately matters. Politics may be necessary, but it's finally incidental to what people do with their lives—even, as far as that goes, what they do with their public lives.

While I was visiting in Washington, I went out to eat with a couple of poets. Both of them people with enormous talent and energy, and both of them come to town to take senior federal positions not necessarily related to their writing. Yet our conversation began with politics. And it tended to circle back to politics, as though only the political validates an idea and only the political makes it real.

Still, they were great conversationalists, smart and funny, and at the end of the evening they began to insist that what we lack in America is a good translation of Terence. Hardly anyone reads ancient Roman comedy anymore, and when they do, it's usually Plautus. But Washington is getting more Rome-like by the day, if only people would see it, and "what we *really* need," one of them shouted out into the suddenly hushed restaurant, "is a new Terence. A Terence for our time!"

It was silly, and it was serious—important and utterly beside the point. And as I walked back to my Washington hotel, I thought: I want more of that kind of conversation. I just want it somewhere else. Anchorage, maybe, or Sioux Falls. New York, for that matter.

Joseph Bottum

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Correspondence

University Diversity

Regarding Jennifer Rubin's article on left-wing attempts to uphold racial preferences in Missouri ("Missouri Asks a Loaded Question," October 22), it should be noted that when California stopped using "affirmative action" a decade ago, minority students still went to college, but their enrollment dropped at the top U.C. schools, while increasing elsewhere.

This was not a catastrophe. Degrees from elite universities are neither necessary nor sufficient for success in life.

I think that many on the left fight for racial preferences because "affirmative action" is a symbol of their imagined righteousness. It's a commitment to social justice, so never mind that such social engineering has no effects other than to put downward pressure on academic standards and create racial tension on campus.

The merits don't matter when people get mesmerized by a symbol.

George C. Leef
Raleigh, N.C.

Guldimann Memo Redux

There are a number of inaccuracies in Michael Rubin's article ("The Guldimann Memorandum," October 22). The 2003 memorandum was written by Sadegh Kharrazi, Iran's ambassador to France at the time, with Tim Guldimann, the Swiss ambassador to Iran, and edited by Javad Zarif, then a deputy foreign minister and one of Iran's premier experts on the United States. Far from being merely "circulated," as Rubin writes, the agenda was approved by Iran's senior leadership, including supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—a relative by marriage of Kharrazi.

The agenda was not shot down by Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith but by Bush administration indifference. In my book, I quote a senior U.S. diplomat then dealing with the Iran issue as saying that the overture was never seriously considered by the administration, then in a triumphalist mood over Iraq. The reference to Wolfowitz and Feith comes in a quote from Richard Armitage, then deputy secretary of state. Armitage said Wolfowitz and Feith blocked a swap of leaders of the

Mujahedin e-Khalq, the Iranian terrorist group harbored by Saddam Hussein, for al Qaeda detainees in Iran.

Barbara Slavin
Washington, D.C.

Michael Rubin responds: Barbara Slavin is wrong. In a May 4, 2003, cover letter, Tim Guldimann writes that he developed the proposal in conversation with Sadegh Kharrazi. Other reporters recognized the red herrings involved in the Guldimann offer:

(1) Most diplomatic correspondence is signed; Guldimann's memo was not.

(2) Real diplomatic correspondence is on official letterhead; the Iranian offer was not.

(3) Governments do not send proposals with which they disagree; at his 2003 meetings, Guldimann said the proposal had the "80 percent" acceptance of the Iranian government. He did not know with which portions they disagreed.

Nor can Slavin explain why Guldimann would pass an Iranian offer to undersecretary-level American officials when British foreign secretary Jack Straw was an established go-between with the Iranian foreign minister on sensitive American issues. There was already direct dialogue between the United States and Iran above Guldimann's and Sadegh Kharrazi's level; indeed, American and Iranian officials had met in Geneva the day before Guldimann unveiled his proposal.

Slavin has been misled by her sources. Former Iranian U.N. ambassador Mohammad Javad Zarif represents the Islamic Republic's interests. He lied when he promised a month prior to the start of the Iraq war that the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps would remain outside Iraq. And, when he sees the opportunity to use credulous journalists to pour fuel on the political fires, he does not hesitate.

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the weekly Standard

Winning One Battle, Fighting the Next

America has won an important battle in the war on terror. We turned an imminent victory for Al Qaeda In Iraq into a humiliating defeat for them and thereby created an opportunity for further progress not only in Iraq, but also in the global struggle. In the past five months, terrorist operations in and around Baghdad have dropped by 59 percent. Car bomb deaths are down by 81 percent. Casualties from enemy attacks dropped 77 percent. And violence during the just-completed season of Ramadan—traditionally a peak of terrorist attacks—was the lowest in three years.

Winning a battle is not the same as winning a war. Our commanders and soldiers are continuing the fight to ensure that al Qaeda does not recover even as they turn their attention to the next battle: against Shia militias sponsored by Iran. Beyond Iraq, battles in Afghanistan and elsewhere demand our attention. But let us properly take stock of what has been accomplished.

At the end of 2006, the United States was headed for defeat in Iraq. Al Qaeda and Sunni insurgent leaders proclaimed their imminent triumph. Our own intelligence analysts and commanders agreed that our previous strategies had failed. The notion that a "surge" of a few brigades and a change of mission could transform the security situation in Iraq was ridiculed. Many experts and politicians proclaimed the futility of further military effort in Iraq. Imagine if they had been heeded.

Had al Qaeda been allowed to drive us from Iraq in disgrace, it would control safe havens throughout Anbar, in Baghdad, up the Tigris River valley, in Baquba, and in the "triangle of death." Al Qaeda In Iraq had already proclaimed a puppet state, the Islamic State of Iraq, and was sending money and fighters to the international al Qaeda movement even as it was supplied with foreign suicide bombers and leaders by that movement. The boasts of Osama bin Laden that his movement had defeated the Soviet Union were silly—al Qaeda did not exist when the Soviet Union fell—but they were still a powerful recruiting tool. How much more powerful a tool would have been the actual defeat of the United States, the last remaining superpower, at the hands of Al Qaeda In Iraq? How much more dangerous would have been a terrorist movement with bases in an oil-rich Arab country at the heart of al Qaeda's mythical "Caliphate" than al Qaeda was when based in barren, poverty-stricken Afghanistan, a country where Arabs are seen as untrustworthy outsiders?

Instead, Al Qaeda In Iraq today is broken. Individual al Qaeda cells persist, in steadily shrinking areas of the country, but they can no longer mount the sort of coherent operations across Iraq that had become the norm in 2006. The elimination of key leaders and experts has led to a significant reduction in the effectiveness of the al Qaeda bombings that do occur, hence the steady and dramatic declines in overall casualty rates.

Al Qaeda leaders seem aware of their defeat. General Ray Odierno noted in a recent briefing that some of al Qaeda's foreign leaders have begun to flee Iraq. Documents recovered from a senior Al Qaeda In Iraq leader, Abu Usama al-Tunisi, portray a movement that has lost the initiative and is steadily losing its last places to hide. According to Brigadier General Joseph Anderson, chief of staff for the multinational coalition in Iraq, al-Tunisi wrote that "he is surrounded, communications have been cut, and he is desperate for help."

How did we achieve this success? Before the surge began, American forces in Iraq had attempted to fight al Qaeda primarily with the sort of intelligence-driven, targeted raids that many advocates of immediate withdrawal claim they want to continue. Those efforts failed. Our skilled soldiers captured and killed many al Qaeda leaders, including Abu Musab al Zarqawi, but the terrorists were able to replace them faster than we could kill them. Success came with a new strategy.

Al Qaeda excesses in Anbar Province and elsewhere had already begun to generate local resentment, but those local movements could not advance without our help. The takfiris—as the Iraqis call the sectarian extremists of al Qaeda—brutally murdered and tortured any local Sunni leaders

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who dared to speak against them, until American troops began to work to clear the terrorist strongholds in Ramadi in late 2006. But there were not enough U.S. forces in Anbar to complete even that task, let alone to protect local populations throughout the province and in the Sunni areas of Iraq. The surge of forces into Anbar and the Baghdad belts allowed American troops to complete the clearing of Ramadi and to clear Falluja and other takfiri strongholds.

The additional troops also allowed American commanders to pursue defeated al Qaeda cells and prevent them from reestablishing safe-havens. The so-called "water balloon effect," in which terrorists were simply squeezed from one area of the country to another, did not occur in 2007 because our commanders finally had the resources to go after the terrorists wherever they fled. After the clearing of the city of Baquba this year, al Qaeda fighters attempted to flee up the Diyala River valley and take refuge in the Hamrin Ridge. Spectacular bombings in small villages in that area, including the massive devastation in the Turkmen village of Amerli, roughly 100 miles north of Baghdad, that killed hundreds, were intended to provide al Qaeda with the terror wedge it needed to gain a foothold in the area. But with American troops in hot pursuit, the terrorists had to stay on the run, breaking their movement into smaller and more disaggregated cells. The addition of more forces, the change in strategy to focus on protecting the population, both Sunni and Shia, and the planning and execution of multiple simultaneous, and sequential operations across the entire theater combined with a shift in attitudes among the Sunni population to revolutionize the situation.

Some now say that, although America's soldiers were successful in this task, the next battle is hopeless. We cannot control the Shia militias, they say. The Iraqis will never "reconcile." The government will not make the decisions it must make to sustain the current progress, and all will collapse. Perhaps. But those who now proclaim the hopelessness of future efforts also ridiculed the possibility of the success we have just achieved. If one predicts failure long enough, one may turn out to be right. But the credibility of the prophets of doom—those who questioned the veracity and integrity of General David Petraeus when he dared to report progress—is at a low ebb.

There is a long struggle ahead in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and elsewhere against al Qaeda and its allies in extremism. We can still lose. American forces and Afghan allies defeated al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2001 as completely as we are defeating it in Iraq. But mistakes and a lack of commitment by both the United States and the NATO forces to whom we handed off responsibility have allowed a resurgence of terrorism in Afghanistan. We must not repeat that mistake in Iraq where the stakes are so much higher. America must not try to pocket the success we have achieved in Iraq and declare a premature and meaningless victory. Instead, let us be heartened by success. We have avoided for the moment a terrible danger and created a dramatic opportunity. Let's seize it.

—Frederick W. Kagan

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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DALE STEPHANOS

Generation Vex

The (really) long goodbye of the Baby Boomers.

BY **P. J. O'ROURKE**

Thus reported the Associated Press on Tuesday, October 16, 2007:

> The nation's first baby boomer applied for Social Security Monday, the start of an avalanche of applications from the post-World War II generation.... Kathleen Casey-Kirschling ... was born one second after midnight on Jan. 1, 1946, making her the first baby boomer—a generation of nearly 80 million born from 1946 to 1964.

O rend thy garments, America! Heap ashes upon thy head. We, the generation of generations—triumphant in our multitudes, invincible, indomitable, insufferable—have come into our inheritance. Hereby we claim our birthright. Give us all your money.

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The pittance that is a current Social Security payment was intended to maintain the doddering retirees of yore in their accustomed condition of thin gruel and single-car garages. Such chump change will hardly suffice for today's vigorous sexagenarians intent on (among other things) vigorous sex, in places like Paris, St. Bart's, and Phuket.

How can present Social Security allotments be expected to fund our sky-diving, bungee-jumping, hang gliding and white-water rafting, our skiing, golf and scuba excursions, our photo safaris to Africa, bike tours of Tuscany and sojourns at Indian ashrams, our tennis clinics, spa treatments, gym memberships and personal fitness training, our luxury cruises to the Galapagos and Antarctica, the vacation homes in Hilton Head and Vail, the lap pools, Jacuzzis, and clay courts being built thereat and the his and hers Harley Davidsons?

And we haven't even touched on the subject of Social Security's civil union life partner, Medicare. It won't take much sky-diving, bungee-jumping, hang gliding, and white-water rafting before we all require new hips, knees, elbows, back surgery, pacemakers, and steel plates in our heads. And the expense of these will be as nothing compared to the cost of our pharmacological needs. Remember, we are a generation that *knows* drugs. From about 1967 until John Belushi died, we created a way of life based almost entirely on drugs. And we can do it again. Except this time, instead of us trying to figure out how to pay for the fun by selling each other nickel bags of pot, you the taxpayer will be picking up the tab. And did I mention that we'll expect to be airlifted to the Mayo Clinic every time we have an ache or a pain? Nothing smaller than a Gulfstream G-3, please.

So just give us all the money in the federal, state, and local budget. Forget spending on the military, education, and infrastructure. What with Iraq, falling SAT scores, and that bridge collapse in Minneapolis, it's not like the military, education, and infrastructure are doing very well anyway. Besides, you don't have a choice. We are 80 million strong. That's a number equal to almost two-thirds of the registered voters in the United States. Do what we say or we will ballot you into a socioeconomic condition that will make North Korea look like the clubhouse at Pebble Beach.

And that's the good news. Beggaring government is the least of the damage that we baby boomers intend to inflict over the next 30 or 40 years. What we're really up to is something more diabolical. Our generation is going to do what our generation has always done best. We're going to shape the American social fabric to our will and make the entire nation conform to our ideals, judgments, and tastes. It will be like the Clinton administration

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but much, much worse. (An interesting little irony since in '08 we're probably going to get a Clinton administration that's much, much worse.)

We're going to make all of you old like we are—old and dumpy and querulous and fuddled. We're achieving it already. Look at the hip young men walking around in their high-water pants, wearing stupid bowling shirts buttoned up to the collar. A bunch of 28-year-olds are going to Starbucks dressed as their grandpas. And what about teenage droopy drawers? That's gramps's other fashion-forward look, perfect for a weekend of crab grass killing and mulching the hydrangeas. Great big cushy, ugly sneakers—be they ever so expensive or young-athlete-endorsed—are nothing but the dread "comfortable shoes" that have been worn by the geriatric for eons.

We have rendered mere school children as dependent upon Ritalin as we are upon Lipitor and Levitra. And watch those kids go out and play. They can't so much as hop on a bike without being swathed in helmets, knee pads, shin guards, and elbow cushions. It's like seeing John Kerry skateboard. Then there's the Segway, which is nothing but a device to make an able-bodied person in the prime of life look as pathetic as if he were in a walker.

Traffic jams are everywhere, but it's not because of too many cars or too few highway lanes. It's just slow driving in the famous old-age mode and with on-board navigation systems to provide someone to have a grumpy argument with even when you're alone.

What else do oldsters do besides drive slowly? They watch TV. Flip through the cable channels and compare what you see to what was seen 50 years ago: *I Love Lucy*, *The Honeymooners*, *Burns and Allen*. When it comes to fuddled, is not the whole entertainment industry drooling in its second childhood?

We baby boomers are growing old—but growing old with a vengeance. Our hands may be palsied and arthritic, but we hold America's fate in them. And America's fate can be summed up in one word: *youthanasia*. ♦

The Two-Man Race

Only Rudy and Mitt have credible scenarios.

BY FRED BARNES

Ron Paul has been a striking presence in the Republican presidential debates. One result is he's raised an unimaginable amount of money—$5.1 million in the third quarter—for an obscure congressman from Texas. Another is he's jumped to fourth place (7.4 percent) in a New Hampshire primary poll. Yet practically no one takes him seriously as a possible Republican presidential nominee. The reason is Paul has no credible scenario for winning the nomination, much less the presidency.

Scenarios matter. They offer a way to judge the presidential race. Strong candidates can outline a sequence of likely victories or impressive finishes in the caucuses and primaries that would lead to the nomination. Weak candidates can't. And, to be clear, a strategy and a scenario aren't the same. A scenario is a vision of a candidate's path to victory.

At this point, with the first voting just nine weeks away, only two candidates—Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney—have credible scenarios. In that sense, the Republican campaign has become a two-man race, Rudy vs. Mitt. John McCain and Fred Thompson may not like this. They have scenarios, too, but theirs aren't terribly credible.

This means just what you think it does. More likely than not, the Republican nominee will be Giuliani or Romney. I remember the old Ken Murray television show in the 1950s that would cut to Hollywood and Vine, where, it was said, "anything can happen and usually does." That's true of politics as well. Still, the best bet is Rudy or Mitt.

There are three things to keep in mind when evaluating the presidential race in 2008. First, national polls don't matter at all. Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and John Kerry polled at 13 percent or less nationally before the primaries, then locked up the Democratic nomination a few weeks later. State polls provide a better clue of what may happen. Second, the primaries are a dynamic process. Win in the early states and you have a far greater chance of capturing the later primaries—and the nomination. Third, money is more important than ever in 2008. If a long shot like McCain or Thompson or even Mike Huckabee wins in Iowa (January 3) or New Hampshire (January 8) or South Carolina (January 19), there won't be enough time for him to raise the funds needed to compete effectively in Florida on January 29 and the 20-plus primaries on February 5. Television ads are expensive, but necessary.

Romney has an early-primary strategy aimed at Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. He's poured money into those states, broadcast TV spots, and built organizations. Fox News polls show him leading in Iowa and New Hampshire and a close second in South Carolina.

If he wins in Iowa and New Hampshire, he'll have history on his side. No presidential candidate in either party has failed to win the presidential nomination after finishing first in Iowa and New Hampshire—that is, since 1972 when Democrat Edmund Muskie managed the dubious feat of winning both but not the nomination. Romney also has the best shot to win the Michigan primary on January 15. He grew up in Michigan and his father George was governor. The other Republicans have all but ignored Michigan.

So the Romney scenario is obvious. He wins early and takes off like a rocket. His name identification soars. Just as significant, he'll have the money—his own, plus funds he's raised—to compete fully on February 5, Super Tues-

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day. I think this scenario is believable. Of course it's just a scenario, nothing more.

Contrary to reports, Giuliani is not ignoring the early states. Well, Iowa maybe. He's campaigning aggressively in New Hampshire and leads in the Fox poll in South Carolina. If he stayed out of every state until the Florida primary, that would be fatal. The early winner would gain all the media attention and swamp him.

But Giuliani's focus is on Florida and then on the big-state primaries on February 5 in California, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey. He, too, has the funds to compete. His scenario—breaking out in Florida and blowing away the field on Super Tuesday—is credible in my view.

However, he could do well on Super Tuesday and still not lock up the nomination. The same is true for Romney. Should that happen, the Romney scenario sees conservatives drifting to him as the alternative to the more liberal Giuliani. Former congressman Vin Weber, a Romney adviser, says there's a ceiling on how many Republicans will back Giuliani, one that will keep him from winning the nomination. We'll see.

McCain's scenario depends on improving on his run in 2000 against George W. Bush. Then he skipped Iowa, won in New Hampshire, lost in South Carolina, and won in Michigan. But he couldn't compete in enough states to deny Bush the nomination. Now, McCain's best-case scenario has him winning in New Hampshire, where he's been gaining, and in South Carolina, where he has a solid organization, and taking off from there. It's conceivable, but he lacks the money he'd need on February 5.

Thompson's scenario involves doing well enough in Iowa and New Hampshire to be a viable candidate by the time South Carolina rolls around and winning there. What then? Beating Giuliani and Romney in Florida and winning at least the southern primaries (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee) on Super Tuesday, plus Oklahoma and a few other states. But his strategy of running as the only "consistent conservative" hasn't stirred enough support to produce a credible scenario leading to the nomination.

Pollster Frank Luntz, who has conducted focus groups at four Republican presidential debates this year, says voters liked the feistier McCain of 2000 more than the restrained McCain now. And he "lost the early debates" on one issue, immigration. As for Thompson, the focus groups of Republicans liked him "but they don't see the passion," Luntz says. "In the end, Republicans won't vote for a laid back candidate."

The bigger problem for McCain and Thompson, Republican consultant Jeffrey Bell says, is "they're not in control of their own destiny." To win primaries, they "need help" in the form of a serious blunder or collapse by Giuliani or Romney or a lesser rival. That could happen, but you can't base a winning scenario on it. McCain, for instance, might pick up support if Thompson faded, and vice versa. But that's purely speculative.

Come to think of it, there is a credible scenario for Ron Paul. That would mean running as the Libertarian candidate for president in the general election. His scenario would see him winning more votes than any Libertarian presidential nominee ever has. Just not enough to win the presidency. ♦

Awakenings

The Schiavo case revisited.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

On October 19, only months after being nearly dehydrated to death when his feeding tube was removed, Jesse Ramirez walked out of the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix on his own two legs. Ramirez is lucky to be alive. Early last June, a mere one week after a serious auto accident left him unconscious, his wife Rebecca and doctors decided he would never recover and pulled his feeding tube. He went without food and water for five long days. But then his mother, Theresa, represented by lawyers from the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund, successfully took Rebecca to court demanding a change of guardianship on the grounds that Rebecca and Jesse's allegedly rocky marriage disqualified her for the role.

The judge ordered that Jesse be temporarily rehydrated and nourished. Then Jesse regained consciousness. Now, instead of dying by dehydration, he will receive rehabilitation and get on with his life—all because his mother rejected the reigning cultural paradigm that a life with profound cognitive dysfunction is not worth living.

Ramirez is only the latest instance of an unconscious patient waking up after being consigned to death by dehydration. Take the disturbing case of 12-year-old Haleigh Poutre in Massachusetts. Haleigh barely survived terrible child abuse and then was nearly done in by the very people charged with protecting her. Only eight days after she was hospitalized in the wake of a beating, the Massachusetts Department of Public Social Services, acting on doctors' solemn assurances that she was "virtually brain dead," requested permission to remove her respirator and feeding tube. This request was approved by the Massachusetts Supreme Court.

But the doctors, social work-

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Most Americans agree energy security is a top national priority, because they want to ensure their families' quality of life now and into the future. So why do some in Congress want to raise taxes on the development of oil and natural gas resources?

History shows that changing the rules by raising energy taxes has serious consequences. After Congress levied a "windfall profits" tax in the 1980s, its own non-partisan Congressional Research Service determined this tax diverted $79 billion from domestic energy investment, reduced U.S. oil production by as much as 1.26 billion barrels and increased oil imports.

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ers, and judges were wrong about Haleigh's prospects. Just before her life support was withdrawn, she began to exhibit signs of awareness—she picked up a stuffed duck when requested—leading to a last-minute reprieve. Today, while Haleigh's exact condition is not public information, reports in the media indicate she is awake and aware and able to eat some foods.

Beyond these and other unexpected spontaneous awakenings, there is the news that some patients diagnosed with persistent vegetative state may actually be cognizant. This discovery stunned the scientific community after doctors conducted a sophisticated brain scan upon a supposedly deeply unconscious British woman. Unexpectedly, the scan looked, well, normally reactive to stimuli. As reported by the *Washington Post* on September 8, 2006:

> Without any hint that she might have a sense of what was happening, the researchers put the woman in a scanner that detects brain activity and told her that in a few minutes they would say the word "tennis," signaling her to imagine she was serving, volleying and chasing down balls. When they did, the neurologists were shocked to see her brain "light up" exactly as an uninjured person's would. It happened again and again. And the doctors got the same result when they repeatedly cued her to picture herself wandering, room to room, through her own home.

Even though the woman remains physically unable to react, she is clearly cognizant.

In other medical developments, a few unconscious patients have been awakened by medication—paradoxically, the sleeping agent that goes by the brand name Ambien. It doesn't always work, but in a few cases, people who have been unresponsive for years have become responsive for the time during which the medication is active in their systems. In Japan, deep brain stimulation of patients in a persistent vegetative state via implanted electrodes has left three of eight patients awake, aware, and communicative, and a fourth markedly improved. Research into these potentially groundbreaking advances in the care of the profoundly brain injured continues.

Looming over all this good news like the proverbial elephant in the living room is the Terri Schiavo debacle. Almost every story reporting these hopeful events emphasizes that the Schiavo case was "different." Maybe the writers are experiencing subliminal guilt over the part their biased and misleading reporting played in the wrong that was done to Schiavo. Indeed, in the wake of polls showing the public supported her 2005 dehydration, the media have portrayed the effort by Republicans in Congress to pass a law to save her life as an attempt to impose their religious views on a private family.

This myth has become a staple of the Democratic presidential campaign, despite the fact that the denigrated legislation was enacted in almost record time by one of the most bipartisan congressional margins seen during the Bush presidency. Indeed, passage in the Senate required unanimous consent, which means any senator—including presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Joe Biden, and Chris Dodd (but not Barack Obama, who was not yet in the Senate)—could have stopped the bill in its tracks by simply saying no. None did so. Just as they voted for the Iraq war and later opposed it when it became unpopular, these Democrats pretend they were not essential players in the federal effort to save Schiavo's life. (The bill also received support from about 40 percent of House Democrats.)

This political revisionism about the Terri Schiavo case coincides with a panicked retreat among many who once robustly opposed dehydrating the cognitively disabled. Emboldened are those who seek to supplant the equal sanctity of human life with

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a "quality of life" value system that accords to the profoundly cognitively impaired less value than the rest of us. This cultural tide now endangers thousands of people whose lives depend on how they are perceived by doctors, family members, and society.

In this climate, Jesse Ramirez-type stories can become more numerous, yet still barely penetrate the public consciousness. Increasingly, we hear about sustenance being withdrawn within days of a serious brain injury. And now that these helpless people are deemed dehydratable, there is a growing clamor in the professional journals to transform them into natural resources to be exploited like a corn crop—as sources of vital organs and subjects for experimentation. To show how far this line of thinking has already gone, bioethicists writing in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* recently advocated transplanting pig organs into people diagnosed with PVS to determine the safety and efficacy of xenotransplantation (the transplantation of animal organs into human patients).

A serious cultural consequence of the Terri Schiavo drama has been the devaluation of the weakest among us into a disposable and exploitable caste. But it is not too late to reverse the tide. Jesse Ramirez, Haleigh Poutre, and the groundbreaking research into the treatment of serious brain injury are powerful reminders that where there is life, there is hope. Those who understand that all persons, regardless of capacity, deserve to be treated as beloved members of the human family have good reason to shake off the Schiavo rout and return to the fray. ♦

But Who Will Surveil the Judges?

The FISA court and its failings.

BY GARY SCHMITT

For one who recently returned from Europe, where a colleague and I interviewed an array of domestic security officials in key European democracies, it is a bit of an out-of-body experience to examine the various bills now pending on Capitol Hill that aim to govern how the U.S. government conducts foreign electronic surveillance. While the exact mechanisms for intercepts and wiretaps vary from nation to nation, the overwhelming standard for such collection in Europe is simple: Does it make sense to target someone for surveillance, and is it, on its face, reasonable to do? Overwhelmingly, the judgment about whether it is reasonable is left in the hands of either the executive or an investigating magistrate. Any oversight is minimal.

Now, this may not be a path Americans would particularly want our own government to follow. But it is a useful reminder that there is more than one way for a democracy to address the issue of electronic surveillance and civil liberties.

This month, two new bills governing electronic surveillance were put forward in Congress. The reason for the flurry of activity is that this past spring, a judge from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court—the secret court that was established by Congress in 1978 to oversee domestic wiretapping for intelligence purposes—ruled that the government's program to monitor the emails and calls of foreign targets required warrants. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which set up the court and provided the standard by which warrants could be issued, presumed that its writ would cover collection done in the United States, which at the time almost exclusively meant tapping physical wires. Foreign intelligence would be collected by intercepting radio and microwave transmissions. Yet today, international traffic has moved to fiber optic cables and is regularly routed through the United States. It was the judge's opinion that even though the calls or messages originated overseas and may have even ended overseas, the fact that they were making their way through the United States meant that FISA's more stringent warrant requirements for domestic communication applied.

This brought collection to a screeching halt. The National Security Agency suddenly needed a warrant from the FISA court for each overseas terrorist lead it was tracking, just in case the email system a suspect used might pass through the United States. This proved an impossible task, and in August Congress passed an amendment to FISA which allows the government, without a warrant, to intercept communications it reasonably believes begin or end in a foreign country. The Democratic leaders in Congress signed off on the measure to avoid looking soft on terrorism, but were reluctant to concede that President Bush's earlier, post-9/11 decision to bypass FISA's warrant requirements in intercepting foreign communications possibly involving U.S. citizens was justified. Thus, they added a six-month sunset provision to the bill. The new bills are intended to be a more considered remedy than that short-term fix.

Neither bill is much to write home about. The House's "Respon-

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sible Electronic Surveillance that is Overseen, Reviewed, and Effective [RESTORE] Act of 2007" is nearly as convoluted as its title. The act would require the government to petition the FISA court for generalized orders authorizing the electronic surveillance of foreign individuals or groups outside the United States for one year. Spying on Americans abroad would require a specific warrant based on FISA's "probable cause" standard that the person is believed to be a terrorist or an agent of a foreign power. And, if as a result of the approved general surveillance an American came under suspicion, the government would have to apply for a specific court order to continue to monitor that individual's communications.

In addition, the measure sets up a rigorous system of quarterly reporting to the House and Senate Intelligence and Judiciary committees on all applications made to the court and compliance audits conducted by the attorney general, the director of national intelligence, and the inspector general of the Justice Department. And, finally, while the bill would protect telecommunication companies who provide assistance to the government in carrying out further authorized surveillances from civil suits, it does nothing to exonerate those companies who have previously cooperated with the government in conducting warrantless surveillance. They are left on their own to fend off the more than 40 civil suits now pending in the federal courts.

The Senate bill, in that respect, is sounder. It provides retroactive protection for the activities of what even the *Washington Post* called "patriotic corporate citizens." Also, the Senate's proposed changes to FISA would not require a warrant for conducting surveillance of overseas targets. But the bill still mandates that the FISA court review and approve the procedures designed to ensure that the targets of the surveillance are "reasonably believed" to be outside the United States and mandates that the intelligence community not target a U.S. citizen, whether the collection is acquired here or outside our borders, without a FISA court warrant applying the probable cause standard. And, finally, like the House bill, the Senate bill has added a new layer of reporting and oversight.

Of the two bills, the administration is of course more inclined to favor the Senate's. No doubt the FISA court would approve any reasonable set of procedures to conduct foreign surveillance. And, indeed, the only problem from the White House's point of view appears to be the requirement that a regular FISA warrant be obtained for collecting information against a U.S. citizen even if that person is outside the United States.

But FISA was only meant to apply to wiretaps conducted domestically. Both the Senate and House bills nose the FISA court into overseeing foreign collection—providing a new check on a presidential prerogative. As the FISA court's own court of review stated in 2002:

> All the other [federal appellate] courts to have decided the issue held that the President did have an inherent authority to conduct warrantless searches to obtain foreign intelligence information. . . . We take for granted the President does have that authority and, assuming that is so, FISA could not encroach on the President's constitutional power.

And, contrary to how Congress thinks about these matters today, there was a time when a majority of members thought that the president retained a prerogative in this area. Prior to FISA's passage, for example, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 set out the procedures for federal wiretapping. It explicitly stated that nothing in this act "shall limit the constitutional power of the President to take such measures as he deems necessary to protect the Nation against actual or potential attack." And when FISA was passed in 1978, the House committee report accompanying the bill noted that the act

> does not afford protection to U.S. persons who are abroad, nor does it regulate the acquisition of the contents of international communications of U.S. persons who are in the United States, where the contents are acquired unintentionally.

It's not clear if either measure will pass as it stands. The Senate Judiciary Committee has still to weigh in on the proposed bill, and neither the committee chairman, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, nor the ranking member, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, has historically been inclined to give the presidency any leeway in the area of electronic surveillance.

In a perfect (or just more reasonable) world, the House and Senate Intelligence committees would start over. Constantly trying to amend FISA presumes that FISA's underlying structure (with its secret court of review) and its standard for issuing warrants ("probable cause") are worth preserving. We might remember our own system of separation of powers while picking up a thing or two from our European allies. Searches, electronic or otherwise, should be "reasonably" connected to the government's legitimate function of protecting us from terrorist attacks. (Or, in the words of the Fourth Amendment, searches should not be "unreasonable.") As Judge Richard Posner has noted, FISA

> retains value as a framework for monitoring the communications of known terrorists, but it is hopeless as a framework for detecting terrorists. [The law] requires that surveillance be conducted pursuant to warrants based on probable cause to believe that the target of surveillance is a terrorist, when the desperate need is to find out who is a terrorist.

Increasingly, we are asking the judges who sit on the FISA bench to make decisions that judges have avoided making since the country's first days—that is, to give opinions on matters that are not directly tied to a real case or provide for any adversarial process. No doubt these judges would take seriously the job of assessing the reasonableness of the various procedures the administration might be

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required to submit to them under the new laws, but is this the proper task for a judge, let alone judges who operate in secret and are themselves unaccountable? Far better to give the president back the constitutional authorities he has traditionally held and allow Congress to exercise the full powers of oversight that it unwisely delegated to the FISA court back in 1978. ♦

'Murder with Impunity'

Iran targets the Baha'is—again.

BY PAUL MARSHALL

The Iranian government is currently intensifying its persecution of its largest religious minority, the Baha'is. This reveals something of the government's nature, and also sheds light on the hotly debated question: Does the regime remain a revolutionary one, or has it become instead a "normal country," one that, despite its fervent rhetoric, aspires only to international acceptance and regional power?

The regime has always persecuted the Baha'is, of whom 300,000 (out of some 5 million worldwide) still live in Iran. The Baha'i religion was founded in Iran in the mid-1800s, and the regime demonizes its adherents as heretics or apostates from Islam, who therefore should have no legal status or protection and who should be eradicated. However, its program in the 1980s of murder and imprisonment drew too much international attention and condemnation. So the government decided to pursue a strategy of slow strangulation.

The current campaign has its specific roots in a confidential Iranian government document sent in 1991 to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei by Muhammad Golpaygani, secretary of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council. Following Khamenei's "recent directives," and approved by then-President Rafsanjani, it outlined a plan gradually to choke the Baha'i community. They were not usually to be subject to further arrests or deportations from the country: Henceforth the government was to ensure that "their progress and development are blocked." They could be enrolled in schools but only if they "have not identified themselves as Baha'is." They were to be expelled from universities altogether. They could have jobs only on condition that they not "identify themselves as Baha'is," and, if employed, must have only "a modest livelihood" and be denied "any position of influence." Khamenei added a handwritten note to the directive expressing his approval, thus conferring on it the status of an official decree. (These and other documents have been made available by the Baha'i community—see news.bahai.org.)

The regime continued to persecute the Baha'is, as well as other religious minorities, and parts of this plan were carried out—including their exclusion from universities and many jobs. But now the government's program has entered a more intensive and systematic phase. An October 29, 2005, confidential letter sent on Khamenei's instructions by Major General Hossein Firuzabadi, chairman of the Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces, ordered the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force to "acquire a comprehensive and complete report" to identify all Baha'is.

On August 19, 2006, Mohammad-Reza Mavvalizadeh, director of the Ministry of the Interior's Political Office, ordered provincial governors' security officers to monitor Baha'i "social activities" and sent out a questionnaire to collect details of Baha'i incomes and occupations, and even burial locations. At about the same time, referring to the 1991 plan, Asghar Zari'i, director general of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology's Central Security Office, ordered 81 universities to expel any Baha'i students and report back to confirm that they had done so.

On April 9, 2007, the province of Tehran's headquarters for intelligence and security sent a letter from Revolutionary Guard Colonel Husayni to provincial police forces telling them to review any Baha'i-held business licenses and exclude Baha'is from "high earning" and "sensitive" areas. With paranoid scope, "sensitive" areas include not only "newspaper and periodical shops," "publishing and bookselling," and "Internet cafes," but also "jewelry and watch making, coffee shops, gravures, the tourist industry, car rentals, hotel management, and tailoring and training institutes."

Because Baha'is are held, as apostates, to be religiously unclean, they were also to be banned from "catering at reception halls," restaurants and cafes, grocery stores, pastry, coffee, and kebab shops, and ice cream parlors. Finally, for reasons unclear, they must be excluded from "stamp making," "childcare," and "real estate," as well as cultural areas.

Baha'is are under other pressures. They are vilified in the media. Banks are closing their accounts and refusing loans. This summer in Kermanshah, according to an account on news.bahai.org, "a 70-year-old man was sentenced to 70 lashes and a year in prison for 'propagating and spreading Bahaism and the defamation of the pure Imams.' In Mazandaran, a court has once again ruled against three

Paul Marshall is senior fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom.

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women and a man who are charged with 'propagation on behalf of an organization which is anti-Islamic.'" On September 9 and 10, the government bulldozed one of their cemeteries near Isfahan, while in Yazd in July another was extensively damaged by earth-moving equipment.

In May 2006, 54 Baha'is were arrested in Shiraz, the largest roundup since the 1980s. Over the last two years, some 129 have been arrested, released on bail, and are now awaiting trial. In many cases, high bail demands have required Baha'is to hand over business or work licenses and deeds to property. There are also threats from vigilante groups such as the uneuphemistic "Association Hostile to Apostate Baha'is," which has threatened the life of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi for her defense of them.

These events clearly demonstrate that the Iranian regime is vicious even toward gentle, peaceful, and apolitical people. But they also show that the government remains afraid of international opprobrium on this and other points. The 2006 directive ordered security officials to proceed "cautiously and carefully" lest too much notice be taken. There are additional indications that the regime, rather than being proud of what it claims are "Islamic principles," seems determined to hide them.

When asked about Baha'is in his September 24 National Press Club speech, President Ahmadinejad said merely that Iran recognizes only four "divine religions." He declined to mention or defend either the government's recent actions or the regime's longstanding "Laws of Islamic Punishment" under which Baha'is fall in the category of "murder with impunity" so that, if they are murdered, the state will not punish their killers. (At Columbia University, he showed similar shame about his country's draconian penal code in deflecting a question about Iran's intolerance of gays by asserting that there are no homosexuals in Iran. While proclaiming the glories of the Iranian model, he hid the fact that Articles 109 and 110 of its legal code prescribe the death penalty for male homosexual acts, while Articles 129 and 131 specify 100 lashes for women, with death for the fourth offense.)

But Iran's growing systematic campaign against Baha'is suggests something more. These regulations and restrictions are not haphazard but are systematically structured and, as such, are remarkably reminiscent of the Nazi Nuremberg Laws imposed against Jews in the 1930s. They are steps toward the destruction of a religious community, and they require the international condemnation and pressure that the Nuremberg Laws did not receive.

Iran's actions are reminiscent of the Nazis in another way: Even while under great internal and external pressure, the regime is still committed to diverting resources to pursue an ideological and religious campaign that conforms to no realist evaluation of any national interest. The mullahs' Iran is not a normal country. ♦

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—Bill Kristol

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (2)

Should we re-examine endlessly repeated clichés?

In a previous installment in this series of clarifying messages about Israel and the Middle East, we examined certain myths which, by dint of constant repetition, had acquired currency and acceptance. We looked at the myth of "Palestinian nationhood," the myth of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") being "occupied territory," the myth that Jewish settlements in these territories are "the greatest obstacle to peace," and the myth that Israel is unwilling to "yield land for peace." And we cleared up the greatest myth of all, namely that Israel's administration of the territories, and not the unrelenting hatred of the Arabs against the Jews, is the root cause of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. But those are not all the myths; there are more.

What are more of these myths?

■ **Myth:** The Arabs of Israel are a persecuted minority.

Reality: The over one million non-Jews (mostly Arabs) who are citizens of Israel have the same civil rights that Jews have. They vote, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and are part of Israel's civil and diplomatic service, just as their Jewish fellow citizens. Arabs have complete religious freedom and full access to the Israeli legal, health and educational systems – including Arabic and Muslim universities. The only difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews is that Jewish young men must serve three years in the military and at least one month a year until age 50. Young Jewish women serve for two years. The Arabs have no such civic obligation. For them, military service is voluntary. Not too surprisingly, except for the Druze, very few avail themselves of the privilege.

> "It is in our national interest that reality, not myths, govern our policy."

■ **Myth:** Having (ill-advisedly) already given up control of the Gaza Strip, Israel should also give up the administration of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") because strategic depth is meaningless in this age of missiles.

Reality: Israel is a mini-state – about half the size of San Bernardino county in California. If another, even smaller mini-state were carved out of it, Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of 100 retired U.S. generals and admirals. If the Arabs were to occupy whatever little strategic depth Israel has between the Jordan River and its populated coast, they would not need any missiles. Artillery and mortars would suffice, since Israel would be only nine miles wide at its waist. Those who urge such a course either do not understand the situation or have a death wish for Israel.

■ **Myth:** If Israel would allow a Palestinian state to arise in Judea and Samaria it would be a democratic state and would be totally demilitarized.

Reality: There is no prospect at all that anything resembling a democratic state could be created in the territories. There is not a single democratic Arab state – all of them are tyrannies of varying degrees. Even today, under partial Israeli administration, Hamas and other factions fight for supremacy and ruthlessly murder each other. Another Lebanon, with its incessant civil wars, is much more likely. The lawlessness and chaos that prevail in Gaza since Israel's withdrawal is a good prospect of what would happen if Israel – foolishly and under the pressure of "world opinion" – were to abandon this territory. As for demilitarization, that is totally unlikely. Because – with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, most of which are in a declared state of war with Israel, at its borders – an irresistible power vacuum would be created. Despite pious promises, the arms merchants of the world would find a great new market and the neighboring hostile Arab countries would be happy to supply anything else that might be needed.

■ **Myth:** Israel should make "confidence-building gestures" for the sake of peace.

Reality: What really is it that the world expects Israel to do for the sake of peace? Most of the 22 Arab countries consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and don't even recognize its "existence." That has been going on for almost sixty years. Isn't it about time that the Arabs made some kind of a "gesture?" Could they not for instance terminate the constant state of war? Could they not stop launching rockets into Israel from areas that Israel has abandoned for the sake of peace? Could they not stop the suicide bombings, which have killed hundreds of Israelis and which have made extreme security measures – such as the defensive fence and convoluted bypass – roads necessary? Any of these would create a climate of peace and would indeed be the "confidence-building gestures" that the world hopes for.

Countless "peace conferences" to settle this festering conflict have taken place. All have ended in failure because of the intransigence of the Arabs. President Clinton, toward the end of his presidency, convened a conference with the late unlamented Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, the prime minister of Israel at that time. Mr. Barak offered virtually everything that Arafat had requested, except the partition of Jerusalem and the acceptance of the so-called refugees, their descendants having swollen from the 650,000 who fled the nascent state of Israel during the War of Liberation, to an incredible 5 million. Arafat left in a huff and started his infamous intifada instead, a bloody war that has cost thousands of Palestinian and Israeli lives. Israel is America's staunchest ally and certainly its only true friend in that area of the world. It is in our national interest that reality, not myths, govern our policy.

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Paying a Call on the Saudi Embassy

The struggle for reform continues.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

October 22-26 was designated "Islamofascism Awareness Week" in a series of events held at college campuses around the United States. The effort was organized by the David Horowitz Freedom Center. Predictably, the program elicited a bad reaction from Islamists. The Saudi daily *Shams* announced on September 4 that the Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh—known to moderate Muslims as the "terrorist factory"—had begun an Internet offensive against Horowitz, mentioned by name as the organizer of the campus awareness campaign. It was one of many recent signs that the Saudis are attentive to Western criticism of their doctrine and regime.

Coincidentally, even as college students and visiting speakers were exploring the concept of "Islamofascism" in an academic setting, more than 1,000 American Muslims from the Midwest and Eastern Seaboard gathered in Washington on October 22 to demonstrate outside the Saudi embassy against Saudi Arabia's support for "Wahhabi fascism." Called by a new coalition, *Al-Baqee.org*, the protest demanded that the Saudis stop exporting Wahhabism, the ultrafundamentalist state religion in the Saudi kingdom, and thus end support for global terror.

Al-Baqee.org is named for Jannat al-Baqi, a cemetery in Medina that housed the graves of the Prophet Muhammad's relatives and companions, and which was leveled by the Wahhabis in 1925. The Wahhabis justified this vandalism with their claim that religious honors to any human being, living or dead, even Muhammad himself, detract from worship of the one God. *Al-Baqee.org* was established by Iraqi-American and other Shia Muslims affiliated with moderate Iraqi ayatollah Ali Sistani.

According to the Al-Baqee leaders, the demolition of that cemetery in Arabia is a direct antecedent to the bombings of Shia and Sufi sacred structures in Iraq, such as the Golden Shrine in Samarra, blasted three times over the past two years. Their demonstration at the Saudi embassy was inspired by a report in the Saudi daily *al-Watan* (The Nation) in late July that Wahhabi clerics had issued fatwas calling for attacks on Shia holy sites at Karbala and Najaf in Iraq. If these sites were attacked, coalition soldiers as well as innocent Iraqis would almost certainly be killed in the chaotic aftermath.

Al-Baqee's literature provides a novel and encouraging example of American Muslim candor about the problems within Islam today. Above all, the group has no compunction about identifying radical Islam with fascism. A leaflet distributed at the protest called Saudi Wahhabism

> a radical doctrine that is a dangerous and violent threat to Americans and non-Americans, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As a close U.S. ally, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is responsible to uphold the values of the American Constitution in defending religious freedom and providing safe spaces for worship within its borders.

A letter addressed by Al-Baqee to Saudi ambassador Adel al-Jubeir declared,

> The Kingdom has neglected to provide basic civil rights to many of your citizens, and knowingly persecutes them based on their race, gender, and religion. . . . As a government, you are not fulfilling your responsibilities in providing the basic civil rights all humans deserve.

This sentiment echoed the latest report on Saudi Arabia by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, issued on October 18 (and accessible at uscirf.gov). Saudi Arabia remains a "country of particular concern" to the State Department for its violations of religious liberty. A delegation of the commission, led by Michael Cromartie of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, visited the desert monarchy in May and June to assess Saudi promises to promote greater religious freedom and abate radical indoctrination. It found most of the promises hollow.

Saudi authorities did little to facilitate the commission's work during the visit. Riyadh's officialdom refused commissioners' requests to meet with top functionaries of the religious militia or *mutawiyin*, formally titled the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, as well as representatives of the ministries of education and justice. Similarly, the commission's requests to the Saudi embassy in Washington for copies of current Saudi school textbooks—a major concern since older textbooks incited violence against non-Muslims—have gone unanswered.

The commission's report strengthens calls for an end to the export of extremist ideology, real change in school curricula, a curb on the activities of the *mutawiyin*, removal of limitations on all religions, and establishment of effective human rights agencies inside the country. It also supports the charge that Wahhabi clerics have issued a series of fatwas legitimizing violence against Shia Muslims. And the American delegation reported that they were prevented by U.S. diplomats, on the pretext of lack of security, from visiting Najran, on the Saudi-Yemeni border, to investigate complaints of discrimi-

Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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nation against the Ismaili Shia minority there.

The commission directed special attention to the possible use of a school in the Washington suburbs for the export of extremism. Owned by the Saudi embassy, the Islamic Saudi Academy (ISA) operates two campuses in Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia. The commission has recommended that the State Department investigate closing ISA, which instructs the offspring of Saudi diplomats and other children in Wahhabism. The academy may be in violation of the Foreign Missions Act, which regulates institutions operated in the United States by other countries.

The ISA has replied to inquiries from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom the same way Saudi dignitaries did on their home soil: with silence and denial. But Saudi media reveal that the Wahhabi clerics and their supporters in the royal family are feeling pressure from within and without. They have come up with new and irrational means of harassing ordinary Muslims. For example, female members of the *mutawiyin* now chase other female Muslims out of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, ending an Islamic tradition, since the time of Muhammad, that encouraged women to pray at Islam's most sacred site.

Speaking truth to power: protesters outside the Saudi embassy in Washington, D.C.

But not all the news from Saudi Arabia is bad. The country's highly popular satirical television show *Tash Ma Tash* (meaning, roughly, "Whatever"), shown only during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, this year criticized death sentences for apostasy under Saudi *sharia*. Some weeks ago, a group of women organized a committee to demand the right to drive. And, partly in response to the protests of Shias and other victims of Wahhabi terrorism in Iraq, the Saudi government claims it is going ahead with the construction of a security fence on the Iraqi-Saudi border, which could cost $1 billion.

Despite this mixed picture, many believe that King Abdullah actually wants Saudi Arabia to become a modern country that excites respect rather than fear and contempt. In 2005, he authorized the establishment of a 24-member all-male Human Rights Commission appointed by the government and reporting directly to him. This is in addition to the more independent National Society for Human Rights, created in 2004 and appointed by the country's Consultative Council. Its 41 members include 10 women, and it too reports to the king. While not all parts of the government have fully cooperated with these bodies, the U.S. commission notes their work as a positive step in any Saudi transition away from a totalitarian form of Islam.

Yet another independent group pressing for peaceful change in Saudi Arabia, this one headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia (cdhr.info), led by a Saudi American, Ali Alyami. In its new strategic plan for the democratization of the Wahhabi monarchy, the center proposes, among other measures, expansion of the 150-member Consultative Council to become a representative legislature, full citizenship and empowerment of women, free elections at local, regional, and national levels, public oversight over the treasury, a non-*sharia* judiciary, and firm repudiation of sectarian discrimination.

Nearly all these matters—Wahhabism and its export, cultural vandalism, harassment by the *mutawiyin*, discrimination against Shias, radicalization in schools, abuse of extraterritoriality by Saudi diplomats in the United States, oppression of women, absence of public transparency, and rejection of elementary norms of human rights—have been thrust into public awareness since the revelation in 2001 that Saudi Arabia is not a reliable ally of the United States. The forthrightness of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom is laudable, but an effective solution to America's Saudi problem has been unconscionably delayed. The Bush administration should pay as much attention to Wahhabi fascism as Saudi diplomats were forced to do when their prison-like embassy was surrounded by Muslim protesters—on the first day of Islamofascism Awareness Week. ♦

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Roger Stone, Political Animal

'Above all, attack, attack, attack—never defend'

BY MATT LABASH

Roger Stone in his office at Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler.

WEEKLY STANDARD / LEV NISNEVITCH

New York/Miami

Being a skilled confidence man is both a blessing and a curse. If you truly excel at the long con, raising it to a form of art, marks will never know they've been taken. But if you become renowned for such artistry, when it is synonymous with your very name, people never believe you're off the grift, even when you're playing straight.

Such is the life of Roger Stone, political operative, Nixon-era dirty trickster, professional lord of mischief. It's hard to assume he's not up to something, because he always is. He once said of himself, "If it rains, it was Stone." For that's the view most people take of him. Three years ago, everyone from the DNC's Terry McAuliffe to the leftwing blogosphere blamed him for leaking George W. Bush's forged Air National Guard records, the ones that looked like they would damn Bush, but ultimately blew up Dan Rather's career. It's preposterous, he says, a triple bank shot that no one could ever have conceived of. "I get blamed for things I have nothing to do with," he says, somewhat wounded. But when asked about all the things he doesn't get blamed for that he does have something to do with, he thinks a bit, then shrugs. "It does balance itself out," he says.

Naïfs might say he's a cancer on the body politic, everything that is wrong with today's system. But maybe he is just its purest distillation: Politics is war, and he is one of its fiercest warriors, with the battle scars to prove it.

Matt Labash is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The first time I laid eyes on Roger Stone he was standing poolside at a press conference on the roof of the Hotel L'Ermitage in Beverly Hills. With a horseshoe pinkie ring refracting rays from the California sun and a gangster chalk-stripe suit that looked like it had been exhumed from the crypt of Frank Costello, Stone was there to help his friend and longtime client Donald Trump explore a Reform party presidential candidacy in 2000.

Actually, it was more complicated than that. After having recruited Pat Buchanan to seek the nod ("You have to beat somebody," Stone says), he pushed Trump into the race. Trump relentlessly attacked Buchanan as having "a love affair with Adolf Hitler," but ended up folding. A weakened Buchanan went on to help the Reform party implode, and Republicans suffered no real third-party threat, as they had in 1992, thus helping Stone accomplish his objective. If, in fact, that was his objective. These things are often hard to keep track of with Roger Stone.

Trump's short-lived campaign provided lots of memorable Stone moments. There was the scene on the roof, where Stone, a dandy by disposition who boasts of having not bought off-the-rack since he was 17—he's now 56—taught reporters how to achieve perfect double-dimples underneath their tie knots, while providing them hand sanitizers should they want to shake hands with the germophobe Trump. Then there were the hardball negotiations he drove backstage at the *Tonight Show*, where he promised access to the dressing room, but only if we refrained from "making fun of Mr. Trump's hair" in print.

But the moment that has most stuck with me came after reporters had just watched Trump dispense invalu-

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able life tips at a Tony Robbins seminar ("Get even. When somebody screws you, screw 'em back—but a lot harder"). Stone mounted the bus, which in Trumpian fashion was named "A Touch of Class," and announced, "I'm here. Who needs to be spun?"

It was a throwaway line, not even one of the serially quotable Stone's best, but the naked cynicism at the heart of it might be why his fans in the press corps over the years have called him things like "a state of the art sleazeball," "an extreme rightwing sleazeball," and the "boastful black prince of Republican sleaze" (the sleaze theme is popular). Color me contrarian, but I will say something I don't believe another Washington reporter has ever admitted publicly: I like Roger Stone.

Over the years, we've had our ups and downs: the occasional threats of litigation over some piece I was writing about one his clients, his playful stabs at blackmail over fabricated infractions (once accusing me of hitting on his wife at a Reform party convention by giving her my cell phone number, at a time when I had neither met her nor acquired a cell phone). He doesn't actually mean any of this, of course—he's just keeping in game-shape.

It's why I find sentiments like "Who needs to be spun?" strangely refreshing. Unlike most political hacks, who are bloodless participants in a pageant which turns almost entirely on artifice, Stone acknowledges the game and his exploitation of it. He often sets his pronouncements off with the utterance "Stone's Rules," signifying listeners that one of his shot-glass commandments is coming down, a pithy dictate uttered with the unbending certitude one usually associates with the Book of Deuteronomy. Some original, some borrowed, Stone's Rules address everything from fashion to food to how to screw people. And one of his favorite Stone's Rules is "Unless you can fake sincerity, you'll get nowhere in this business." He is honest about his dishonesty. "Politics with me isn't theater," he admits. "It's performance art. Sometimes, for its own sake."

He has dabbled in at least eight presidential campaigns, everything from working for Nixon's Committee To Reelect the President (CREEP) in 1972, to helping stage the infamous 2000 Brooks Brothers Riot in Miami, where angry Republicans in loud madras shorts and pinstriped suits helped shut down the Miami recount. (Stone was directing traffic by walkie-talkie from a nearby van.)

He made his bones as a principal in the Reagan-era lobbying firm Black, Manafort & Stone. Stone's bread is now primarily buttered by strategizing for corporate clients, everything from casino interests to the sugar industry, but his love of the action insures that he is usually waging at least one exotic war on the political periphery.

For instance, after Trump, he went on to advise the gubernatorial campaign of New York billionaire Tom Golisano. It can be regarded as a revenge fantasy against George Pataki who Stone considers a counterfeit conservative, and whose lobbying commission dinged Stone and Trump for a $250,000 settlement—Trump paid—the largest in state history, for not filing lobbying reports about radio ads attacking the expansion of Indian casino interests. It chafes Stone to this day. He is adamant that the settlement contained no admission of wrongdoing, and says it wasn't his call, joking that Trump settled because "he's a pussy."

Stone exacted a little revenge by causing headaches for Pataki, who won the 2002 general election, but who was aced out of the desired Independence party nomination by

'It's about resilience. That's the whole point of Nixon. Coming back from adversity. Coming back from defeat. Coming back from setbacks. It's persistence. Obviously, he was tragically flawed in a number of ways. Aren't we all?'

Stone and Nixon in 1989.

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Golisano. This was partly due to tried-and-true Stone ploys such as mailing voters official-looking envelopes inscribed with "Important Property Tax Notice," while the message inside informed voters that since George "Patakifeller" had been governor, "property taxes in your county have increased by nearly 48.9 percent."

In Stone capers, revenge is a powerful motivator. His friend Jeffrey Bell—an occasional contributor to this magazine—had Stone run his failed bid for New Jersey senator in 1982. Bell says that Stone was so agitated at losing the Republican primary to the dearly beloved, pipe-smoking, septuagenarian Millicent Fenwick that Stone packed Bell's pollsters off to her Democratic opponent, Frank Lautenberg, and they persuaded his campaign to attack her on age grounds. Lautenberg narrowly won. Bell, who'd resisted the tactic, recalls hearing Stone saying something to the effect of "I am going to kill that woman." "He's a lord of mischief," laughs Bell. "He likes money, and has made plenty of it, but that's not the prime mover. I don't think he's that ideological. He's a political junkie. He loves to be in the middle of it."

Shortly after Golisano's defeat, Stone got involved in advising Al Sharpton's 2004 presidential campaign. Many cast Sharpton as the Trojan horse Stone was trying to ride into the enemy camp. Stone doesn't deny that it was great fun watching Sharpton take the piss out of Howard Dean for not employing minorities—which he did at Stone's prompting. But he dismisses any grand conspiracy: "I love the game. I'm a kibitzer. I couldn't resist giving him good advice. He followed some, he ignored most." Though as Sharpton's campaign manager Charles Halloran, an old Stone crony, told me during the South Carolina primary in 2004, "If Roger found some ants in an anthill that he thought he could divide and get pissed off with each other, he'd be in his backyard right now with a magnifying glass."

I hadn't had dealings with Stone since the Sharpton campaign, but became convinced we needed to renew our acquaintance in August. Stone had been retained in June, for $20,000 a month, to help demoralized New York State Republicans gain ground from the caped-crusader/governor Eliot Spitzer (who many, including Spitzer, seem to regard as some sort of cross between Robert Kennedy and Jesus). Stone and a loose collection of co-conspirators began battering the governor for his administration's numerous ethical lapses. (When I called Stone for this story, he asked if I'd gotten all the anti-Spitzer emails. I told him I wasn't sure, it seemed like I'd been receiving five a day for months from all sorts of mysteriously named accounts. "Good," he said. "It's working.")

In July, Spitzer took a major hit when the state's Democratic attorney general, Andrew Cuomo, chastised the governor's office for asking the state police to keep tabs on Republican state senate leader Joseph Bruno (Stone's client) and for peddling travel documents to the press to try and create a "Choppergate" scandal. Bruno was cleared of misusing the state's air fleet, and Stone and his associates have kept up a relentless anti-Spitzer email blitz. (One of their recent Spitzer missives showed Osama bin Laden driving a New York City cab, referring to Spitzer's bone-headed play of allowing illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses without proof of citizenship.)

Stone seemed more interested, however, in refocusing attention on an old scandal that had been wheezing along: a more complicated story, but one he regarded as having possible criminal repercussions thanks to a shady tangle of loans. Stone believes in waging multifront wars, and his philosophy on the subject is one of the most sacred of Stone's Rules, right up there with "Don't order fish at a steakhouse," "White shirt+tan face=confidence," and "Undertakers and chauffeurs are the only people who should be allowed by law to wear black suits." It goes like this: "Hit it from every angle. Open multiple fronts on your enemy. He must be confused, and feel besieged on every side."

At issue is a $5 million campaign loan given to Spitzer by his multimillionaire father, Bernard, during the 1998 race for attorney general. During that campaign, Spitzer claimed that he'd secured the loan by mortgaging apartments given to him by his real-estate developer father. He appears to have lied, however, having later admitted that his father was essentially financing the campaign by paying off the loan—a possible violation of campaign law. The story wasn't nearly as sexy as Choppergate until the Spitzer camp announced that on Monday, August 6, the 83-year-old Bernard Spitzer had received a message from a phone traced to Roger Stone's Central Park South apartment. A voice that appeared to be Stone's said:

> This is a message for Bernard Spitzer. You will be subpoenaed to testify before the senate committee on investigations on your shady campaign loans. You will be compelled by the senate sergeant at arms. If you resist this subpoena, you will be arrested and brought to Albany—and there's not a goddamn thing your phony, psycho, piece of s— son can do about it. Bernie, your phony loans are about to catch up with you. You will be forced to tell the truth. The fact that your son is a pathological liar will be known to all.

Stone denied it was him. Bruno didn't take a position, but threw Stone overboard anyway, terminating his contract. And everyone I know who knows Roger Stone had the same reaction: Of course he did it. I didn't even need to hear the tape (which pretty much cinches it) before coming to this conclusion. The speech is absent his sparkling wit, but the rest of the touches are his: the B-movie-gangster

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intimidation, the high-wire dramatics, the swinging song-of-the-street cadences à la Sinatra abusing an underling after a couple of Jacks on the rocks.

Over the next week, Stone offered an array of exotic alibis, almost as though he were joking. Possibly, he was. (He did, after all, in the middle of the hubbub, get Richard Nixon's head tattooed on his back at the Ink Monkey in Venice Beach and send a photo of it to reporters, just out of puckish spite.) He initially claimed it couldn't have been him, since at the time of the call in question, he'd been attending the play *Frost/Nixon*. Reporters unearthed a small inconsistency; there'd been no performance that night. Stone posted a review of the play on his Stonezone website anyway, recommending it to Spitzer since "It underlines the dangers of hubris and the inexorable web a public official tangles himself in when he tells a lie." He admitted, however, that he'd confused the dates—an honest mistake. He may be a dirty trickster, but he's not a philistine; he knows the theaters are dark on Mondays.

From there, the story only got stranger. Various other alibis had Stone suggesting somebody used "spoofing" technology to make the phone call look as if it had originated from his apartment. He also offered the possibility that a disgruntled former colleague—and stand-up comedian/impressionist—named Randy Credico impersonated Stone to sandbag him. Credico denied it, telling the *Washington Post*, "That's hilarious." Stone also floated the theory that the landlord of his Central Park South building, H. Dale Hemmerdinger, who is a Spitzer supporter and his pick to head the Metropolitan Transit Authority, might have allowed someone into Stone's apartment to make the call.

Later, Stone made public a two-page apology he'd written to Hemmerdinger. He said that he regretted "any inconvenience or distress my initial comments may have caused . . . despite our political differences, I must say that 40 Central Park South is an excellent building that is extremely professionally operated by capable employees at all levels." Then came the cherry on top: "I am certain that you will render great public service to the MTA."

On its face, the letter appears to be your standard inoculation against potential litigation, but rereading it I get chills. For me, red flags are flapping every which way, as they would for anyone who knows one of the most sacrosanct of Stone's Rules: "Always praise 'em before you hit 'em."

I arrange to see Stone in Manhattan, where he spends roughly one day each week, and Miami, where he lives. But beforehand, he threatens to take me to Ukraine, where the local press has outed him as being involved in the parliamentary campaign of Volodymyr Lytvyn, an Orange Revolutionary alum who's been mentioned as a future president. Like many American political consultants, Stone does the odd election overseas, though he likes to keep it quiet, since it often causes a local furor because "Americans are now hated everywhere in the world—thank you, George W. Bush."

"I don't particularly want to go," he says. "Our lives will be in danger. We will have bodyguards. Plus, the food *sucks*." On the upside, he says, we'll have a buxom translator named Svetlana, and "We can stop over in Amsterdam on the way home, for all the obvious reasons." But, it turns out we don't need to go; his guys on the ground have it covered. But it's a constant struggle, he says: "The Russians love intrigue." As though he doesn't.

He is in perpetual dispute with Lytvyn's local advisers, who he calls the Politburo. They deliberately mistranslate his ads to reflect their own clunky slogans, and he resents their interference, since what could they know about winning free and fair elections, being recently converted Commies and all. The atmosphere is charged enough that he has now taken to sending secret messages directly to the candidate, nicknamed "Mister." Since his team assumes all their communications are monitored, they use code names such as "Buckwheat" and "Beetle." Stone's is "Mr. Pajamas," the same one used by ur-Nixon Dirty Trickster Murray Chotiner, one of his personal heroes and mentors. (Lytvyn's party was successful in the elections.)

I ask Stone how the Spitzer phone call story played over there. He says it's been a boon. Whether he did it or not—and he reminds me he didn't—"they thought it was great." He adopts a thick Ukrainian accent: "We like this. It shows Stone is not a pussy." "It means you have balls and aren't afraid to mix it up," he explains of the call, which if he had made it, it should be noted, was perfectly legal. Things over there tend to be a little more bare-knuckle. It is a place after all, where a politician occasionally gets poisoned by dioxin. "They do say to me, 'Why did they get rid of Nixon, we don't understand?' I say well, his guys broke into the headquarters of the opposition. 'Yeah, so—that's a reason to get rid of him?'"

From his speech to his dress, Stone's an old-school guy with old-school rhythms and tends to prefer old-school haunts, like Gallagher's and the 21 Club. A chronic workaholic, he will nearly always drop what he's doing to eat elaborate sit-down meals. Our first night, we tuck in at Sparks Steak House, which is all dark woods and white table cloths and rich history. Gambino boss Paul Castellano was whacked on the sidewalk outside on John Gotti's orders.

It's a bit nerve-racking figuring how to properly dress for a Stone engagement. His long-time tailor is Alan Flusser, author of the sartorial bible *Style and the Man*, and

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one of Flusser's associates tells me Stone knows enough to work there. Sitting across from him is a bit like sitting across from Mr. Blackwell: Suppose you accidentally went with a single-vent jacket rather than side vents, which Stone finds unthinkable ("I'm not a heathen"), or if you wore trendy flat-front suit trousers instead of ones with properly-draped pleats ("Pants today are like a little church in the valley—no ballroom").

I read once that he has 300 solid-silver wedding ties. He's says it's an exaggeration—he only has about 100. But to give an idea of his obsessiveness, he owns so many suits that there are 100 in storage alone. His closets are meticulously ordered—even his jeans are organized "by jeaniness." He will launch into learned disquisitions on the differences among pencil, chalk, pin, and beaded stripes. He even has strict Stone's Rules about his cufflinks: "Large hub-cap types are for mafia dons from Jersey and Las Vegas lounge singers. Cufflinks should be small, understated, and tasteful. No coffee grinders, no jet planes, no large stones."

Stone makes the scene in a navy double-breasted peaked lapel suit of blue Shantung silk, a white Windsor collar over a blue-and-white striped shirt, white roll-back cuffs (he never says "French cuffs"), a blue patterned Flusser tie, and high-shine black slip-ons by C.J. Cleverly from London's Burlington Arcade.

Though it's unseasonably hot for September, I decide to break out a gray-flannel 3-button I'm particularly fond of, throwing caution to the wind. It's one of Stones Rules: "Be bold. The more you tell, the more you sell," courtesy of advertising guru David Ogilvy. (Stone keeps numerous copies of Ogilvy's *Confessions of an Advertising Man* in his office to dispense to friends.) He says my suit's weight passes muster. It's a relief.

The guy at the table behind us doesn't fare quite as well. Stone says he wants to remove the guy's glasses and "stomp on them." At first, I think they know each other and the guy owes him money. But no, it is just that the guy's Eighties-style oversized tortoiseshells are "an affront to good taste." This happens frequently while I'm in Stone's company. Western-wear with suits drives him particularly bananas: "What do hemorrhoids and cowboy boots have in common?" he asks, "Every asshole eventually gets them."

As we order the first round of drinks, he launches into his life story. Half Italian, half Hungarian, he grew up in Lewisboro, New York. His mom was a small-town reporter, his dad a well driller. It was a fairly lonely childhood. There were no kids around in his rural surroundings, so sports weren't on the menu.

His dad left for work at 6 A.M., got home at 9 P.M., ate dinner, and dropped into bed. "You're not playing catch with your old man," he says. "My guess is he hated his job. But he never complained a day in his life. That's what it took to put food on the table." His folks still aren't entirely sure what he does and wonder why Stone didn't become "a plumber or an electrician or any of those guys who make good money." But, when he was working on Ronald Reagan's campaign in 1979, Stone introduced his dad to the candidate, which he calls "the proudest moment of my whole life. Reagan was great. He said, 'Your son works very hard for us.' Of course, he had no idea what I did."

Stone was bitten by the political bug early. In first grade, he supported John F. Kennedy, because he was Catholic, like Stone, and "he had better hair than Nixon." During a mock election at school, Stone told classmates that

When Stone was working on Reagan's campaign, he introduced his dad to the candidate, which he calls 'the proudest moment of my whole life. Reagan was great. He said, "Your son works very hard for us." Of course, he had no idea what I did.'

Stone and Reagan on Air Force One in 1984.

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if Nixon won, he'd make kids go to school on Saturdays. "Kennedy swept the election," he says proudly, "because of disinformation I spread about Nixon. It was kind of a first experience."

His liberal convictions didn't last long. After being given *Conscience of a Conservative* by a neighbor, he became a Goldwater zealot and rode his bike down to the local Republican headquarters each day to lick envelopes. While Stone considers himself a staunch Reaganite, with a libertarian twist that doesn't want the government "telling me what to do in the boardroom or the bedroom," he has mixed feelings today about his Goldwater infatuation. "It's like he was trying to lose. Going to Tennessee and coming out against the Tennessee Valley Authority? These were suicidal acts." As he developed his political worldview, he realized that Richard Nixon was "more pragmatic, more interested in winning than proving a point." He took a Stone's Rule from Nixon: "Losers don't legislate."

Becoming a student of political history, Stone deduced that Nixon "had been f—ed out of the presidency in 1960, thanks to Joe Kennedy and our mob friends." He wrote a letter to Nixon, then practicing law on Wall Street, to that effect, telling him he should run again. Nixon wrote back, thanking Stone, saying he had no plans to run again, but that if he ever did, he'd be in touch. "Even then, he had full plans to run again," says Stone.

Stone was a student at George Washington University, in Washington, D.C., when Nixon was running for reelection in 1972. Stone invited the deputy director of the Committee to Reelect the President, Jeb Magruder, to speak at the university's Young Republican Club. "There are a bunch of hippie-type, leftwing, pinko degenerates that attend and harass him, but he handles it okay," recalls Stone. "He had highly polished shoes, I remember that very distinctly." Afterwards, Stone hit him up for a job and got one. "My academic studies went right into the toilet. I could read about it, or do it for real. I'd rather do it for real." Though he was extremely junior, Nixon's old hands—"the UCLA ratf—ers" Stone calls them—had him getting into all sorts of hijinks, such as contributing money to a possible Nixon rival in the name of the Young Socialists Alliance, then leaking the receipt to the Manchester *Union-Leader*.

'I'm not good at brown-nosing. Unlike Atwater, I wasn't willing to tell George Bush he's the smartest guy in the world, cause he's not.'
Stone's Rules: 'Nobody ever built a statue to a committee.'

On the campaign trail with Reagan in Ohio in 1984 (Ed Rollins, Ken Khachgian, Mark Higbie, and Stone).

By day, Stone says, he was working as a scheduler for Nixon surrogates. "By night, I'm trafficking in the black arts. Nixon's people were obsessed with intelligence." So at one point, Stone placed a mole in the Hubert Humphrey campaign, who ended up becoming Humphrey's driver. His source reported back all kinds of information—mostly libelous—which Stone kicked up the chain.

Stone speaks of this time nostalgically, but also with some distaste. A lot of what Nixon's henchmen were doing was "ineffective and relatively stupid. Typical of the mentality of the Nixon people who were about to beat McGovern by 20 points." It goes against Stone's beliefs to do risky things for no reason. Though he has represented many casino interests, he doesn't gamble. "I never play games with my own money where the odds are stacked against you," he says.

Stone went to work for the Office of Economic Opportunity, which managed most of LBJ's War on Poverty programs. Bob Haldeman's "charge to us was to dismantle, replace, and fire everybody." After Nixon resigned, Stone spent the rest of the 1970s getting his Republican ticket punched. He worked for Senator Bob Dole (and was fired, after Jack Anderson reported he'd been a Nixon dirty trickster), worked for the Reagan campaign in 1976, was national chairman of the Young Republicans in 1977. He and his first wife honeymooned by serving as camp counselors at the Teenage Republican Leadership Conference.

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Around the time he became northeast chairman of Reagan's 1980 campaign, he had another awakening when he started working with the notorious lawyer Roy Cohn, former McCarthy henchman and also a Reagan supporter. "I'm still kind of a neophyte," Stone admits, "still kind of thinking everything's on the level. 'Cause the truth is, nothing's on the level." At a 1979 meeting at Cohn's Manhattan townhouse, he was introduced to major mobster and Cohn client Fat Tony Salerno. "Roy says to Tony, 'You know, Tony, everything's fixed. Everything can be handled.' Tony says, 'Roy, the Supreme Court?' Roy says, 'Cost a few more dollars.'" Stone loved Cohn: "He didn't give a s— what people thought, as long as he was able to wield power. He worked the gossip columnists in this city like an organ."

Stone, who going back to his class elections in high school has been a proponent of recruiting patsy candidates to split the other guy's support, remembers suggesting to Cohn that if they could figure out a way to make John Anderson the Liberal party nominee in New York, with Jimmy Carter picking up the Democratic nod, Reagan might win the state in a three-way race. "Roy says, 'Let me look into it.'" Cohn then told him, "'You need to go visit this lawyer'—a lawyer who shall remain nameless—'and see what his number is.' I said, 'Roy, I don't understand.' Roy says, 'How much cash he wants, dumbf—.'" Stone balked when he found out the guy wanted $125,000 in cash to grease the skids, and Cohn wanted to know what the problem was. Stone told him he didn't have $125,000, and Cohn said, "That's not the problem. How does he want it?"

Cohn sent Stone on an errand a few days later. "There's a suitcase," Stone says. "I don't look in the suitcase . . . I don't even know what was in the suitcase . . . I take the suitcase to the law office. I drop it off. Two days later, they have a convention. Liberals decide they're endorsing John Anderson for president. It's a three-way race now in New York State. Reagan wins with 46 percent of the vote. I paid his law firm. Legal fees. I don't know what he did for the money, but whatever it was, the Liberal party reached its right conclusion out of a matter of principle."

I ask him how he feels about this in retrospect. He seems to feel pretty good—now that certain statutes of limitations are up. He cites one of Stone's Rules, by way of Malcolm X, his "brother under the skin": "By any means necessary." "Reagan got the electoral votes in New York State, we saved the country," Stone says with characteristic understatement. "[More] Carter would've been an unmitigated disaster."

In the 1980s, Stone and his old friends Charles Black and Paul Manafort hung out their shingle—later to be joined by other skilled knife-fighters like the late Lee Atwater. Stone was often rivals with Atwater, though he affectionately cites his rules: "'Lie low, play dumb, and keep moving.' As opposed to mine, which are 'Admit nothing, deny everything, launch counterattack.' Often called the Three Corollaries."

While Black, Manafort & Stone did work on behalf of blue-chip companies and boutique right-wing causes from the Contras to Angola's UNITA rebels, what they really did was advise presidential candidates. They worked on so many campaigns that in 1986 (when Stone was working with Jack Kemp), a congressional aide remarked to a *Time* reporter, "Why have primaries for the nomination? Why not have the candidates go over to Black, Manafort & Stone and argue it out?"

At this point Stone was operating comfortably in the mainstream—collecting high-six-figure fees, having fashion stories written about him in *GQ* and *Penthouse*, throwing society-page annual birthday celebrations for Calvin Coolidge ("a great do-nothing president")—but even then he demonstrated his self-destructive tendencies. In the thick of the 1988 election season, he called his colleague Lee Atwater's client, George H.W. Bush, a "weenie" in print. Stone has a knack for alienating and says that the people who like him, like him, and those who don't never will anyway.

He seems to think he moves faster alone. (Stone's Rules: "Nobody ever built a statue to a committee.") "I'm not good at brown-nosing. Unlike Atwater, I wasn't willing to tell George Bush he's the smartest guy in the world, 'cause he's not. It's probably not very bright on my part. But I kind of call them like I see them. So I tell *Newsweek* Bush is a weenie. I also tell them if you elect him as president, he'll serve one term and drive the party to its knees, and he serves one term and drives the party to its knees. How do you lose to Bill Clinton? Guy's a f—in' hillbilly. It's tough."

Stone's time-bomb tendencies brought a major life-change for him in 1996, effectively ending his career in mainstream presidential politics. While Stone was serving as an unpaid adviser to Bob Dole, the tabloids got hold of photos of Stone and his second wife, Nydia, striking come-hither poses in swinger's ads, putting out the call for bedroom playmates with exacting specifications: "no smokers or fats please."

His denials were adamant, his alibis elaborate. There was lots of talk about disgruntled employees and frame-ups and credit-card fraud. When I bring this up to Stone, he looks pained. He says the revelations really hurt his wife, which is what bothers him the most. As for the alibis, he shrugs, "I did the best with what I had—which wasn't much."

As I earlier stated, Stone is honest about his dishonesty. I figure in this case, it's partly due to the drinks I ply him with at dinner. (Labash's Rules: "Without alcohol, people tell you what they want to say. With alcohol, they tell you what you want to hear.") But Stone comes clean on this,

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Stone at home in Miami with one of his many dogs.

WEEKLY STANDARD / LEV NISNEVITCH

too. Though he appears to knock down each drink I order him, it turns out he has had only one. He greased the waiter in advance, telling him to only bring olives and water in his martini glass after the first one. He didn't want me to have the edge, in case I was there to whack him like Paul Castellano. It's a trick he borrowed from Lyndon Johnson, who used to down iced tea in highball glasses to gain the advantage over dim-witted reporters who were slugging back the real thing.

Over the course of the week that I spend with Stone, we talk a lot about movies. He's a film buff, and particularly likes the gangster/con-artist/caper genre. We agree on our favorite film: *Miller's Crossing*, the 1990 Coen Brothers flick about underworld ethics. The film is filled with straight-razor repartee not unlike that often uttered by Stone—typical line: "It's a wrong situation. It's getting so a businessman can't expect no return from a fixed fight. Now if you can't trust a fix, what can you trust?"—and chock full of crosses and double-crosses. Characters' motivations are constantly shifting or in question. Nothing is as it initially appears.

It gets me thinking about Stone's own little Bernie Spitzer caper. When I outright accuse him of lying about it, he denies it, but barely: "Even if I did do this, which, like OJ, I didn't, it's not in my interest to cop to something I didn't do." But why would he do it? One of Stone's Rules is "Avoid obviousness." And nothing could be more obvious than this phone call, unless he just wanted it to look that way. Even his political rivals know that he is not a stupid man. When I tell a left-leaning political hand who himself frequently operates in the shadows that I'm doing a piece on Stone, he smiles wickedly, and says: "Whatever people think of Stone and his scandals, he is an absolute artist. He doesn't feel useful if his knife is in the sheath."

Stone's business card features an elegant white-gloved man in top hat and evening clothes from a 1930s *Esquire* ad. He gave the card to a boy once, who looked at it and said, "Are you a magician?" His response: "Sometimes, kid." One gets the sense with Stone, a showman above all else, that he has both the vanity and frustration of the professional illusionist. The trick is only fun to pull so long as someone knows he's pulling it.

Theories abound as to what the trick might be. I float some of them by Stone. Perhaps it was a calculated risk. Make the call to Bernard Spitzer, knowing they'll leak it. It regenerates headlines and gives the loan scandal new life. Sure, Stone takes a hit, and even appears to lose money when Bruno throws him under the bus, but Roger Stone doesn't have to worry about sacrificing respectability, as he hasn't been considered respectable in some time.

Meanwhile, he can fall back into the shadows where he does his best work, perhaps even start a 527 in the form of a concerned-citizens front group to raise money from the throngs of wingnuts and Wall Street types who bear grudges against Spitzer. A group like, say, the Citizens Committee for Checks and Balances, whose

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fundraising letter I obtained, and who, among other things, wants to "expose the illegal activities of the Spitzer administration." A group like that could not only pay one's salary, but could also help one carry out the missionary work of blast mailings, email blitzes, and deep research that might eventually screw Spitzer to the wall (Spitzer's poll numbers are currently at an all-time low). When I run this thought past Stone, he won't confirm anything other than to say, "Shrewd theory."

Once you cross over into Stone Zone psychology, it feels as though you've been dropped in the middle of a David Mamet script. No matter what's been in the papers, nothing seems beyond the realm of possibility. I think about Randy Credico, the "master impressionist" who Stone has accused of impersonating him on Bernard Spitzer's answering machine—the two have been sniping in the press. I suggest to Stone that the whole thing is a set-up. Kooky and implausible as the alibi was, he and Credico are probably in on this together and are just pretending to fight, professional-wrestling style. "Anything is possible," Stone says, giving the air of someone with whom it's fine if you believe the worst, since even if it's not true, it just feeds the lore, and keeps everyone else confused.

I become so suspicious of Stone's deception maneuvers, that I begin to suspect foul play everywhere. After lunch one day, he ditches me when I've been in a restroom too long, instructing a colleague to wait for me. When I catch up with him, I give him the third degree, asking him what that was all about, thinking he was trying to force me into conversation with his guy to casually plant something Stone didn't want to tell me himself. "Once in a while—very rarely—things are benign," Stone says. "Frankly, you were taking too much time in the john. I wanted to get back."

But most of the time, things aren't benign. One afternoon, it seems as though we are just walking the streets of Manhattan. Stone walks everywhere, abhorring cabs because they have lousy air conditioning and "sweating through a suit—that is the worst thing in the world." His brisk gait is interrupted, however, in front of the Harmonie Club on East 60th Street. He stares at it for a while, then smiles.

He tells me that this place could soon become famous. In fact, it sort of already is. One of the city's oldest Jewish gentleman's clubs, it's had a rash of bad headlines in recent years. Some New Yorkers consider it racist because of a lack of black or Hispanic members. Mayor Bloomberg saw fit to end his membership there in 2001, before his first mayoral run. And Barack Obama recently cancelled a fundraiser there on the same grounds.

A little bird has told Stone that Eliot Spitzer's father, Bernard, is a member. Additionally, so is Dale Hemmerdinger, the landlord Stone profusely apologized to and who also happens to be Spitzer's choice for chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority. It strikes Stone that a lot of blacks and Hispanics take public transit in New York, and he wonders how it would play if it were to become known that the governor's pick belongs to a club that excludes them from membership. It seems like the sort of thing that might be troubling at a Hemmerdinger confirmation hearing. And it might be hard for Spitzer to walk away from his nominee, considering his own father belongs to the same club. Maybe nothing will come of it. But it's weird sometimes, how the news can be going one way, then take a funny bounce.

> I bait him by telling him that I usually have man-dogs, not cat-dogs. He glares at me. 'F— you,' he says. Yorkies 'were bred to hunt and kill rats. They are not pussy dogs. Tonight, I'll sic my five on you, and see how you do. They will eat your ass alive.'

A month later, it does. Brooklyn assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries writes a letter to Eliot Spitzer, urging him to pull Hemmerdinger's nomination because he belongs to a predominantly white club, which "sends the wrong signal to the minority community." At his confirmation hearing, Hemmerdinger defends his Harmonie membership, but just a day later, resigns from the club faster than you can cite the most apt of Stone's Rules: "Never do anything till you're ready to do it."

He is confirmed, but the issue won't die. Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell IV charges Hemmerdinger lied during the senate committee hearing by representing that he'd actively recruited minorities while president of the Harmonie Club 20 years earlier, "unless he can show one [minority] person who was a member at the time, as he claimed." Just a week later, it comes out that Bernard Spitzer has been a member of the exclusively white club for 30 years, an inconvenient aside that the governor's aides neglected to mention when defending Hemmerdinger's association with the Harmonie.

As all this unfolds, I ask Stone how he thinks his prophecy was fulfilled. "S— happens," he says.

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I am being chauffeured around Miami in one of Stone's five Jaguars. At the wheel is A-Mill, his 23-year-old driver/computer whiz/all-around Boy Friday. A-Mill looks like he'd fight as a featherweight, but Stone says looks can be deceiving. One late night, when they were walking across a strip-club parking lot together, two large gentlemen tried to mug them. A-Mill reached into his boot, pulled out a blade, and slashed one of them across the face, causing both assailants to run. "Watch this guy," says Stone. "He's a killer."

A-Mill wears a porkpie hat of his own choosing, but with suits, he takes direction from Stone. When he first came to work for him, Stone took him to a haberdashery in Cleveland and lent him the money to buy four suits and some black Peal cap-toe lace-ups. "We deduct $50 from his paycheck each week to pay me back," says Stone. If you want to roll with Stone, you have to look good. (Stone's Rules: "Look good=feel good.")

As we head north of South Beach to Stone's home on Biscayne Bay, Stone reviews his morning itinerary. He will try to outwit some of his rivals in the Ukrainian campaign, dictate a threatening letter to an online magazine that he says has defamed him, and put out a few Stonezone pieces maligning one Spitzer crony or another. Stone is like a U.S. Army of treachery: He screws more people before 9 A.M. than most people do in a whole day.

Stone has a nice life in Miami. He gets out to kayak quite a bit, enjoying the year-round good weather. He and Nydia have five grandchildren. A power law firm based in Fort Lauderdale, Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler, recently brought him on to head their burgeoning public affairs side. The firm's head, Scott Rothstein, is a pitbull litigator with a taste for Bentleys and $150,000 watches. He shares Stone's operating philosophy, telling me that he tells all his lawyers, "Get into the game, or get the f— out of the way."

Except for a poster of a stripper he picked up in Amsterdam and a photo of him standing poolside with pornstar Nina Hartley—she thrusting her glistening glutei at the camera, Stone peddling his own wares with his oiled-up frame packed into a banana hammock—his office is a Hall of Nixonia. There are photos, posters, and letters from Nixon at every stage of his career. I ask Stone, whose politics more closely adhere to Reagan's, why he is such a Nixon fetishist. "It's about resilience," he tells me. "That's the whole point of Nixon. Coming back from adversity. Coming back from defeat. Coming back from setbacks. It's persistence. Obviously, he was tragically flawed in a number of ways. Aren't we all?" (It's hard to tell when Stone stops talking about Nixon and starts talking about himself.)

One of Stone's friends, who's known him professionally for a decade, tells me: "What I find interesting about Roger is how committed to the joke he is. He moons the establishment for the sheer pleasure of it, with no thought to whether it helps him. Obviously most of the time it doesn't and maybe he cares—I'll bet he has mixed feelings—but he doesn't stop. Notice how he's willfully, self-consciously downmarket: Trump, Sharpton, the dyed hair and horseshoe pinky ring. There's an ironic quality to all of it.

"He could have made a lot more money being Mike Deaver. It's not like he's not smart enough to have joined Cassidy and landed Microsoft as a client, like a thousand other semitalented former consultants. Instead, he's nearing 60 and still wallowing in the small-time sleaziness of New York State politics. And he doesn't even live there. There's no master plan with Roger. He just follows the most subversive, amusing course available to him at the time. I sort of respect that."

Stone, for his part, resists attempts to get him to wax maudlin about missed opportunities. But one night as we are having dinner at the Bal Harbour Palm, he talks about the swingers' tabloid scandal which effectively chased him out of Washington—a place he says he detests and doesn't miss. The hardest thing wasn't the story, he says. It was the day he left. The moving van was in front of his house, and he was ready to go. But his beloved Yorkshire Terrier, Pee Wee, ran out the door into the street, was struck by a car, and killed right in front of Stone and his wife. "It was like a final kick in the balls," he says. "I had a hard time getting over that. It's the single worst thing that's ever happened. Pee Wee was an extraordinary dog with a unique level of intelligence and personality. He's just a great dog, even still. And I really miss him."

I don't know what to say. I've never seen this level of vulnerability and human emotion from Stone. It makes me uncomfortable. I ask him what color the dog was. He seems mildly perturbed. "Brown and black—like all Yorkies," he snaps. Wanting the Stone I know to return—I hate to watch men cry—I bait him by telling him I didn't know that, since I usually have man-dogs, not cat-dogs. He glares at me. "F— you," he says. "They were bred to hunt and kill rats. They are not pussy dogs. Tonight, I'll sic my five on you, and see how you do. They will eat your ass alive." It's good to have him back.

His disclosure, however, fosters a new level of understanding and trust. I order us another round of drinks, then go to the restroom. When I return, a tall martini is sitting in front of him. I eye it suspiciously. "What are you looking at?" he asks. "Your drink—what is it?" I inquire. "A martini, obviously," he replies. I ask him to slide it to me, which he reluctantly does. I taste it. I thought we were just a couple of pals a couple drinks into the evening, but I'd forgotten one of Stone's Rules: "Always keep the advantage." It was nothing more than water and olives. ♦

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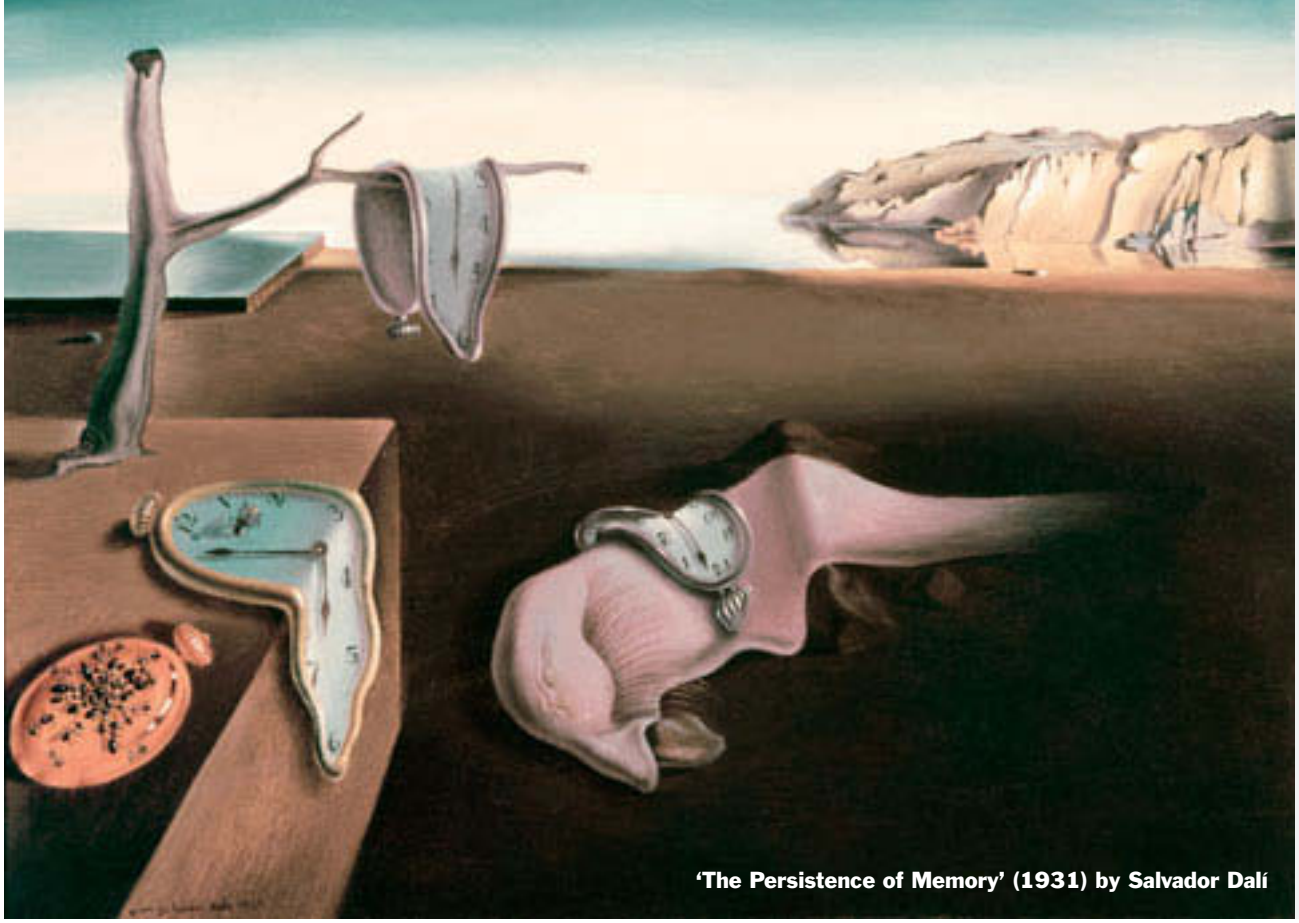

'The Persistence of Memory' (1931) by Salvador Dalí

BETTMANN / CORBIS

From the Beginning

Time is shorter than you think BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

Saint Augustine got it right, confessing in *The Confessions*, "What, then, is time? If no one ask of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not."

It might not do us much good to know what it is, since there's never enough of it anyway, but despite the timely contributions of Einstein and Bergson and Heidegger (*Being and Time*) and Hawking (*A Brief History of Time*) and Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine fabulist who titled one of his conjectures "A New Refutation of Time," it remains a mystery as soon as we take the time to consider it carefully.

The mystery isn't solved, or even pursued, in Pascal Richet's *A Natural History of Time.* Richet, a professor of geophysics in Paris, doesn't concern himself with time as an enigma of philosophy or science, only with the history of efforts to figure out the age of the earth, the sort of time question that can be fairly conclusively answered. Until just the other day the earth was a lot older than it looked. After spending a few dozen pages on biblical chronologies, Richet devotes the rest of his book to the developments in geology and physics that, beginning in the 18th century, made it possible to figure out that the age of the earth is quite a few eons over 6,000 years, unless you're a creationist inhabiting your own planet.

A Natural History of Time
by Pascal Richet
Translated by John Venerella
Chicago, 400 pp., $29

The Greeks and Romans didn't care, because they had a cyclical concept of time. The world had no beginning and no end. Change was illusory, since the future was just a roundabout way of reverting to the past. If there was a real reality—a metaphysical reality, as in Plato—it was timeless and changeless. Inexhaustibly curious about other cultures and customs, the Greeks weren't curious about the distant natural past, and the Romans weren't curious, period. But a few philosophical pagan travelers did make observations about river sedimentation and volcanic activity that suggested long creative processes and time spans in nature.

The Hebrew Bible gave the creative process seven days. But as Richet points out, the important thing was not the the literal truth of the seven-day creation, which was a Babylonian-influenced story that superseded an older

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divine-creation story still embedded in Genesis; it was that the ancient Jews had introduced a beginning of time and hoped for an end.

The creation and the messianic prophecies were major new developments in the human sense of time, substituting linear for circular time. You might call it the invention of news. The Greeks and Romans had a chronic case of neophobia, and toward the end of the Hebrew Bible, the Greek-influenced Ecclesiastes announced that there was nothing new under the sun; but the novel thing about the Bible is the possibility of novelty—unique, irreversible events.

Christianity took it up and ran with it: "Gospel" means news. Time had a direction. History was a one-way road, with a starting point and an apocalyptic or millennial destination. The idea of progress was there somewhere. It was an original story, not a rerun.

But it was a short story for a long time. As late as the end of the 17th century, Bishop James Ussher was calculating that the world began the night before October 23, 4004 B.C., at about 6 P.M. And the Rev. William Whiston, in his runaway bestseller, *A New Theory of the Earth, From its Original to the Consummation of All Things* (1696), determined that the Flood was caused by a comet which brushed the earth on November 28, 2349 B.C., "at two o'clock in the morning, Beijing time, where Noah must have been living at that time," as Richet sums it up.

The word "geology" entered the language in 1760, and soon names like Hutton and Lamarck and Darwin and Kelvin did as well. Richet goes deeply into the scientific story, and what we get in effect is a detailed history of Western geology and physics that can be densely encyclopedic at times but, in broad outline, just renews your admiration for the unprecedented amount of knowledge a few diligent men in a few countries were able to accumulate in a little over a century.

At the end of the 18th century, scientists were still struggling to get out from under Genesis, and by the end of the 19th century, the table was set for Einstein and for the accumulation of geological and astronomical evidence that has given us a current estimate of the earth's age at about 4.5 billion years, which is Bishop Ussher multiplied by roughly 750,000.

Along the way Richet offers some lively thumbnail sketches of the scientists, such as Buffon (Georges-Louis Leclerc, Count of Buffon, Lord of Montbard, Marquis of Rougemont, Viscount of Quincy, and Vidame of Tonnerre), whose fortune allowed him to live undisturbed in monkish seclusion while devoting himself to inventing a new science, natural history. There was Darwin—a mediocre student whose father had told him, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family"—and Ernest Rutherford, who went from digging potatoes on a rugged pioneer farm in New Zealand to the top of British physics in a few years. Or Fritz Houtermans, a German physicist who had to survive detention and interrogation by both the Gestapo and the Soviet NKVD, and did so with both physics and sense of humor intact.

These sketches help scientifically semiliterate readers, like me, negotiate their way through the book, which gets increasingly technical as it goes on. But Richet never loses sight of his story, which is edifying and far from over, as scientists continue to thrash out the *fiat lux* of the Big Bang and the lights-out entropy perhaps looming 100 billion years or so in the future, as well as hypothetical alternate universes rising and disappearing in cyclical succession. The arguments reprise the old competing ideas of eternal worlds and unique creations, circular and linear time.

If there's a moral to the story, it's probably that time remains a riddle, and it's going to take forever to solve it. ♦

Defining Dubya

A rough first draft of the Bush administration.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

When George W. Bush appointed Karen Hughes to be under secretary of state for public diplomacy, with specific orders to enhance the image of the United States in the greater Middle East, Hughes had never been to the region, had no expertise in the Muslims who largely populate it, and had never shown any real interest in it either.

Dead Certain
The Presidency of George W. Bush
by Robert Draper
Free Press, 480 pp., $28

It showed. On her first trip to the Persian Gulf, she approached foreign dignitaries as if they were soccer moms and began with a campaign slogan: "The four E's of diplomacy: Engagement, Exchange, Education and Empowerment." In one meeting, she told her host that the most famous phrase in the Pledge of Allegiance—"One Nation, Under God"—came from the U.S. Constitution.

So why did George W. Bush pick Karen Hughes for such a critical mission? Her words upon emerging from a meeting with an Egyptian sheikh provide one clue: "I think I was able to have a wonderful meeting with His Eminence to talk with him about the common language of the heart."

Stephen F. Hayes, senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is the author, most recently, of* Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President.

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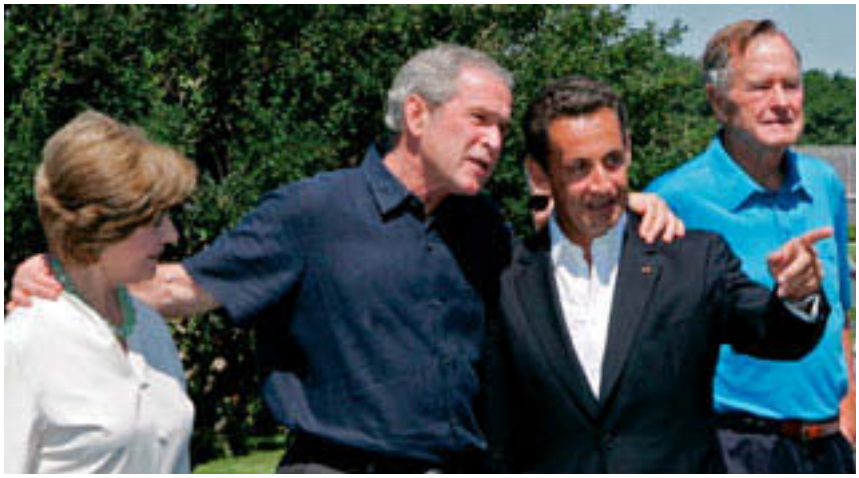
We don't know what His Eminence thought about his introduction to the common language of the heart. But George W. Bush, who years earlier declared that he had seen into the soul of Vladimir Putin, speaks it fluently. Hughes knows Bush as well as anyone other than his wife. And when Bush needs help on the big issues, he often seeks assistance from those most familiar to him, whatever their qualifications and without regard to what the rest of world might think.

And so it was that, as Hughes finished her trip, a reporter approached her for a comment on Bush's likely Supreme Court nominee: "Harriet would be a wonderful Supreme Court justice!"

"Harriet Miers didn't want the job," reports Robert Draper in *Dead Certain*. "She didn't want to be in Washington at all. For those who did not know her, the limits of Miers's ambition might have been hard to gauge. For George W. Bush had made her a player in spite of herself." Throughout his short political career, Bush had frequently turned to Miers for help on legal matters—from his first gubernatorial campaign (1994) through his election as president in 2000 and deep into his administration. So when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor announced her retirement, Miers seemed to him like a natural candidate to replace her.

But conservatives, who had waited years for an opportunity to remake the Court, were furious that Bush had passed over so many qualified candidates to select his friend from Texas. The fight over the Miers nomination was a low point in the Bush administration; but the story of how she came to be chosen, and why she ultimately withdrew from consideration, is a high point in Draper's long look at the Bush presidency.

It is Draper's reporting on Bush and his closest advisers that makes this volume worth reading. Draper covered Bush for *Texas Monthly* before he took his current job as a national correspondent for *GQ*, and had exceptional access to Bush and his team. *Dead Certain* reflects the depth and breadth of Draper's understanding and includes fresh detail about the main players and their often-complicated relationships with Bush and with each other.



STEFAN ZAKLIN/EPA / CORBIS

Laura Bush, George W. Bush, Nicolas Sarkozy, George H.W. Bush, 2007

Draper reports in great detail about how the much-derided "Mission Accomplished" sign appeared on the deck of the USS *Lincoln* and suggests that criticism of Bush stemming from the sign is unfounded. He provides context for some of Bush's gaffes that make them seem more understandable.

Why did Bush publicly compliment FEMA director Mike Brown for his agency's disastrous response to Hurricane Katrina? Moments before Bush praised Brown—"Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job"—Alabama governor Bob Riley had said almost the exact same thing: "Whenever I needed anything here in Alabama, all I've needed to do is call Mike Brown," Riley said. "Mr. President, he's doing a heck of a job."

Draper's portrayal of the president is often sympathetic. His familiarity with Bush is the strength of his book, and it allows him to write about the president in a way that largely avoids caricature.

Unfortunately, this approach does not extend to Bush administration policies. Draper repeats many of the anti-Bush myths propagated by the antiwar left and repeated uncritically in the mainstream press. For example, he writes: "Joseph Wilson had been sent by the administration to Niger in 2002 to determine whether Saddam's government had attempted to obtain uranium from that country. Wilson found that such a transaction had not taken place."

Leaving aside the impossibility of proving a negative, Draper here adopts the long-discredited Joe Wilson framing of the issue. "The administration" did *not* send Wilson; the CIA did—at the suggestion of Mrs. Wilson. And contrary to Wilson's after-the-fact claims, his reporting actually bolstered administration claims that Iraq had sought uranium from Niger.

Draper spends just three paragraphs on the Wilson affair. This seems insufficient, given the impact that nonscandal had on public opinion, and on the Bush administration's defensive posture since the affair began in July 2003. But given Draper's credulous recitation of the anti-Bush spin, readers should be grateful for the oversight.

Draper does this throughout *Dead Certain*, particularly in his writing about the Iraq war and the broader war on terror.

> The conviction that Saddam Hussein was an imminent threat to America and therefore necessitated removal by force began as a kind of communicable agent to which some in the administration had great resistance and others not. Its host bodies belonged to, among others, Vice President Dick Cheney; his chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby; Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz; and Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy. The agent resided in these four men, and in lesser hosts, well before September 11. But after the attack on America, the contagion swept through the Beltway and insinuated itself into the minds of many—including the White House national security adviser and the president of the United States.

The virus metaphor might be fun,

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but Draper seems to misunderstand the most basic elements of the Bush administration's national security strategy. Administration officials argued *ad nauseam* that threats must be eliminated before they become imminent. They made this case in television interviews, in congressional testimony and public speeches, and in various white papers. It is laid out in a document cleverly entitled *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, published in 2002. And Bush himself made this point directly in his 2003 State of the Union address. Speaking of Saddam Hussein, he declared:

> Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late.

Other metaphors prove even more problematic, as Draper writes, at times, beneath his résumé. "A candidate with an obscene war chest," he says, "could afford to spread the field and look down the road to November 7, 2000." And, "Blanco called Card's bluff and stuck to her guns." And, "To shore up the levees and stop the bleeding, the White House pulled out all the stops." And, "Now, though, with the wind suddenly at his back, with no races left to run and the Republican majority behind their fearless party leader . . . well, there were no excuses, were there?"

None at all. ♦

Poverty of Ideas

Is there anything new to be said about the poor?

BY JOEL SCHWARTZ

Charles Karelis is not a philosopher-king, but he can fairly be described as a philosopher-public servant.

Formerly the longtime director of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (in the Department of Education), he has also been president of Colgate. He is currently research professor of philosophy at George Washington, and in this short but ambitious book, Karelis attempts the difficult task of saying something new about poverty—a subject that has been exhaustively studied for decades. Karelis's effort to stake out an original position is laudable but doesn't finally succeed.

The Persistence of Poverty
Why the Economics of the Well-off Can't Help the Poor
by Charles Karelis
Yale, 208 pp., $30

Joel Schwartz, adjunct senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, is the author of Fighting Poverty with Virtue: Moral Reform and America's Urban Poor, 1825-2000.

He begins by making what is usually a conservative argument: Poverty results from the self-destructive behavior of the poor. He mentions five behaviors in particular. The poor are poor because they "are not working much for pay," are "not getting much education," are "not saving for a rainy day," are "abusing alcohol," and are "taking risks with the law."

Karelis's list of the problematic behaviors of the poor is useful, although in two respects it is idiosyncratic. His contention that drinking to excess is an important cause of poverty is refreshingly retro; that claim was commonplace in the 19th century but is practically never voiced today. More surprising is a cause that Karelis omits: The propensity of the poor to produce illegitimate children. Karelis acknowledges that "having children early and out of wedlock is . . . doubtless a big factor in poverty in the United States today," but does not consider it "as global or as perennial as the other factors on our list."

What, then, causes the self-destructive behaviors of the poor? Karelis offers six explanations, which fall into two categories. Three posit the irrationality and "dysfunction" of the poor, who are thought to be characterized by "apathy . . . fragmentation of the self, which leads to short time horizons, and weakness of the will." The other three understand the behavior of the poor as a rational response to their situation and deny the dysfunctionality of the poor. Instead, their behavior is explained as a response to "opportunities [that] are unduly limited" or "perverse incentives created by public policy," or as a result of "atypical preferences."

But Karelis goes on to reject all of these arguments. The poor are not, for the most part, dysfunctional. Nor is it the case that they lack opportunity, that their preferences differ significantly from those of the nonpoor, or that public policy encourages their counterproductive behavior. Karelis argues instead that, given their economic situation, "poverty-linked conduct is efficient," and he elaborates on this claim: "Poor people engage disproportionately in the poverty-prolonging and poverty-worsening behaviors *because they are poor*—and rational. For this conduct is exactly the conduct that makes sense for them."

To make this case, Karelis takes aim at a fundamental postulate of economics: the law of diminishing marginal utility. That law posits that the first dollar of income has the most utility, the second dollar slightly less, the third still less, and so on. Its core idea is that "resources mean most to those who have least. On this basis it is natural to conclude that poor people stand to benefit especially from working for pay."

Karelis contends, though, that the marginalist view is inapplicable to the situation of the poor—and that it underlies all six of the theories of poverty that he finds wanting: "Conventional theories of poverty are divided into those that assert that the conduct in question really contravenes marginalist prescriptions [*i.e.*, the dysfunction theories] and

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those that contend the contravening is a mirage—but neither side questions the validity of marginalism itself."

Karelis claims that "marginalism is mistaken," but in his view it is mistaken only in part. For those who are well off, he agrees, the value of each additional dollar does, indeed, diminish. That rule does not, however, apply to the poor: "Marginalist economics was an economics of more-than-enough that mistook itself for a general theory, applicable to both surplus and deficit."

Of course, the crucial question is why marginalism does not apply to the poor. Why isn't it worth the while of poor people to earn that first (or next) dollar? To answer that question, Karelis, adopting a familiar philosophical practice, argues by analogy. A poor person is like someone who has suffered multiple bee stings. For someone stung once, salve to relieve the sting would be very valuable. But for someone stung seven times, salve that would relieve only one sting would not be particularly valuable because the pain from the other six stings would remain. He explains:

> The person with seven bee stings . . . would not sacrifice much to relieve the sting on his hand, seeing that the pain of it was nearly drowned out by the pain of the six stings on his body. This would seem to be the position of very poor people, for whom work, schoolwork, and (in a much different way) moderation in alcohol use constitute sacrifices that would buy them too little felt relief to be worth making, so many are their troubles.

Let's stipulate that Karelis has accurately stated the problem of someone who's been stung multiple times. But his book is entitled *The Persistence of Poverty*, not *The Persistence of Bee-Sting Pain*. He therefore needs to *show*, and not just to assert, that the poor—to be fair to Karelis, the "very poor"—can aptly be compared to people who have been stung seven times. To simply assert the equivalence *a priori* is to be guilty of excessive abstraction.

It's reasonable to suppose that the poor can be placed on a continuum: Some of them would correspond to people with only one sting, others to people with two, etc. To the extent that significant numbers of poor people resemble people with only one or two stings (or, to look at it differently, people who already command the resources to pay for five or six dabs of salve), Karelis's analogy—and, more broadly, his critique of the relevance of marginalist economics for the poor—becomes less tenable.

To determine the resources of the poor and their capacity for self-advancement would, of course, require empirical study, not philosophical speculation. At least with respect to the American poor, data certainly indicate that many have fewer stings or more salve than a reader of Karelis might suppose. For example, Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation has recently shown, using federal government statistics, that 43 percent of poor American households own their homes. (A typical poor person's home is a three-bedroom house, with one-and-a-half baths, a garage, and a porch or patio.) The typical poor American has more living space than the average (not the average poor) inhabitant of cities like Paris and London.

Karelis argues that, given their economic situation, 'Poor people engage disproportionately in the poverty-prolonging and poverty-worsening behaviors because they are poor—and rational.'

It seems unlikely that poor Americans like these are the metaphorical equivalent of people with seven bee stings, for whom the effort to work to buy one dab of salve is not worthwhile.

In addition to the problem of determining the number of stings from which the poor actually suffer, there's also the problem of how many they suppose they have, and how many they *should* suppose they have. Here Karelis contradicts himself. In one place he asserts that a poor person's assessment of his condition can't be disputed. In effect, the poor person (like Cindy Sheehan, according to Maureen Dowd) has absolute moral authority.

> To put it in terms of stings and salve, a poor Asian immigrant may regard an annual income of twenty thousand dollars as verging on sufficient—as leaving just a few stings unsalved—while a poor African American may regard that same income as very insufficient—as leaving so many stings uncured that it is not worth much effort to get another dab or two of salve. . . . Behavioral differences [between Asian immigrants and African Americans] are to be explained as equally rational, benefit-maximizing responses to the same economic facts, seen and felt differently.

Elsewhere, however, Karelis takes a different view, arguing that poor people harm themselves when they exaggerate their plight and minimize what they might do to relieve it. Thus he contends that civil rights leaders (think, for example, of those who disparaged the desirability of "dead end" jobs) harmed their constituents when their rhetoric reduced "the marginal relief to be expected from a small improvement in objective circumstances. It might even be argued that this rhetoric worsened the poverty problem it was meant to help relieve."

In effect, the hypothetical Asian immigrant's reaction ("that $20,000 job is a step in the right direction") appears objectively preferable to—and more prudent than—the hypothetical African American's reaction ("that $20,000 job offers nothing but chump change"). Despite Karelis's earlier claim that the actions of the poor are rational, here he suggests that the failure to take a job is irrational. In short, he seems to question the basic premise of his argument.

When it comes to offering solutions to poverty, Karelis mostly advocates the expansion of the course correctly adopted by current American social policy: that is, the policy known as "making work pay," which seeks to make "work a more attractive option for low-income people through transfers and other provisions . . . whose benefits depend on the recipient's working."

But Karelis also supports no-strings assistance to the poor: that is, assistance that is not conditional on any efforts by the poor to help themselves. After all, if the poor are given funds to buy four dabs

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of salve, they're more likely to work to be able to purchase three additional dabs themselves. To make this case, though, Karelis must refute the familiar contention that no-strings assistance discourages work: Why work, if you'll be paid even if you don't work?

Karelis does not deal adequately with that obvious objection. He limits himself to a paragraph in an endnote, in which he alludes to "the famous income maintenance or negative income tax experiments conducted by the federal government between 1968 and 1982" which "have often been taken to show that [income] transfers reduce work effort." That conventional view may be wrong, Karelis asserts, because the beneficiaries of the negative income tax may have underreported their earnings.

Is there evidence to support this hypothesis? If so, he doesn't cite it.

In the final analysis, Karelis advances a novel argument on behalf of a very familiar position: Giving money to the poor will solve their problems. But in the past few decades most Americans (and more, though not yet most, American poverty experts) have increasingly come to believe that simply giving money to the poor encourages the behaviors—in particular, not working and not marrying—that make and keep them poor.

It is unlikely that Karelis's ingenious philosophical argument will cause many people to change their minds. ♦

He Walked the Line

The Man in Black 'was rarely out of addiction's grip.'

BY DAVE SHIFLETT

Britney Spears, the world's most prominent lip-syncher, is under scrutiny these days, with tales of substance abuse and excessive butt-flashing that have put her at risk of losing permanent custody of her children. While she'll no doubt eventually convert her troubles into a career-boosting sympathy tour, that she could be considered even a minor practitioner of the dissipative arts indicates a severe decline in standards.

Johnny Cash
The Biography
by Michael Streissguth
Da Capo, 320 pp., $26

Consider, for example, the late Johnny Cash, a world-class pill-popper who, according to long-held lore, was saved only by divine intervention, along with a little help from wife June Carter Cash. Yet this new biography indicates that even the Good Lord couldn't keep him clean for long. In addition, Cash, who lent his talents to the Billy Graham organization, seems to have spent the 1970s and '80s in the occasional company of various Jezebels. He was a maestro on many fronts.

Following his death in 2003, a basic theme ran through many Cash remembrances, including a popular film starring Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon: After years of wretched excess, the Man in Black saw the light, married June, and basically lived happily ever after.

Yet according to Michael Streissguth, rumors of his rehabilitation were greatly exaggerated. Cash was rarely out of addiction's grip.

Johnny Cash: The Biography provides the basic background of Cash's birth, first marriage, stints in the Air Force and as an appliance salesman, and his early musical career, playing three-chord music on a five-dollar guitar of German provenance. Three chords or not, Cash was a prodigy when it came to doping, which played second fiddle to nothing, including Carnegie Hall. Streissguth writes that a 1962 appearance at the fabled New York venue found Cash so debilitated that he could only manage to "whisper" his lyrics.

It only got worse. In October 1965, Cash crashed and burned on the stage of *The Steve Lawrence Show* (CBS), where he had been slated to open the evening with his mega-hit "I Walk the Line." Guitarist Luther Perkins played the intro, Streissguth writes, but Cash blanked on the lyrics. Perkins, an apparently patient sideman, tried 11 more times to get the ball rolling, yet Cash was too stoned to sing. That debacle was followed, a few days later, with a drug bust in El Paso.

Eventually he simply stopped showing up for shows. By 1967, as many as half of his dates were being cancelled.

Those wondering what it takes to compete at this level may be astounded by Cash's dosage. His typical intake was 20-30 amphetamines at a time, three to four times a day. When it came time to throttle back, he'd knock back 20 or so tranquilizers. In the early part of their romance, which ran concurrent with Cash's first marriage, June Carter was also popping pills, though at a reduced rate, according to Streissguth. While myth and moviemakers have Cash cleaning up in order to marry June, former sideman Marshall Grant says Cash was back on dope soon after the wedding and, except for a dry period during 1970-76, was rarely drug-free.

"There wasn't five days from 1976 until he came down with his disease that he was straight," Grant is quoted as saying. "They did a good job covering it up."

Indeed, it seems that tales of divine intervention, at least of the subterranean type, were also ill-founded: Many Cash eulogies mentioned a pre-marriage descent into Nickajack Cave near Chattanooga, where his plan to commit suicide was vetoed by God. "That did not happen," says Grant. We are also

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reminded that Cash, like many touring musicians, was not the best of family men.

"Dad quit coming home," says Kathy Cash, a product of his first marriage. "I remember one year Mom went an entire year without knowing where he was."

Streissguth recaps a few of Cash's other troubles, including being forced to fork over $82,000 for causing a forest fire in Los Padres National Forest in California that destroyed 500 acres and much of the (endangered) condor population. And in an act of what might be karmic significance, one of Cash's worst years of drug backsliding (1983) came "after an ostrich that inhabited an exotic animal farm he owned attacked him and broke five ribs."

The author, who also wrote *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, is clearly an admirer, yet does not look past the soft spots in Cash's body of work. He also writes with gentle humor about Cash's big-screen version of the Jesus story, which the author says included a score consisting of

> Gospel set to boom-chicka-boom. The movie itself proved a compelling personal statement and a credible interpretation of Christ's days on earth, if one could look past the sharp southern accent of Mary Magdalene and the preponderance of combovers among males in the cast.

Streissguth also reminds us, movingly at times, that Cash's latter years were hard. Besides addiction problems, he lost his Nashville recording contract, experienced an erosion of his songwriting talent, and was forced to endure a stint in Branson, Missouri. His alliance with producer Rick Rubin resulted in a series of recordings which are, as Streissguth has it, somewhat mixed: His originals could be compelling, though some covers are reminiscent of an old man crooning on a park bench to the full dismay of the local pigeons.

His final days were black indeed, with June gone—according to the book, Rubin dispatched a faith healer on her behalf—and Cash slowly slipping away. His spirits, Streissguth writes,

> collapsed as the sun fell. The gloaming, he'd say, invoking the Scottish term for evening, was the hardest part of the day. It was the hour when she had passed. He'd stare out the office window, absorbing what he could discern of the shimmering of the setting sun on the lake.

Johnny Cash in custody, El Paso, 1965

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES / GETTY IMAGES

Johnny Cash's music remains popular—he sold over 50 million records—especially with a younger audience that considers the Man in Black to be one of their own. And in any case, whatever his personal shortcomings, much better JC than Britney, who should put on some underwear, get back to rehab, and recognize that her ring of fire, like her voice, is a mere flicker compared with the real thing. ♦

Democracy at Arms

'The Soldier and the State' is 50 years old, and still relevant. **BY MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS**

While the average political scientist is lucky to make a name for himself in one area of the field, Samuel Huntington has made major contributions to three: civil-military relations, democratic theory, and international relations. And while most people think of *The Clash of Civilizations* when they hear his name today, his most influential book—for better or worse—remains one that he wrote exactly a half-century ago: *The Soldier and the State*. Here, Huntington advances an institutional theory of civil-military relations, one that "focuses on the interaction of political actors played out in the specific institutional setting of government."

A good theory possesses three elements: a descriptive or empirical element that accounts for and explains relevant phenomena; a predictive element that enables its adherents successfully to argue that, under such-and-such conditions, a certain outcome can be expected to occur; and a prescriptive or normative element that

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provides a guide to policy based on the descriptive and predictive qualities of the theory.

Huntington's main descriptive or empirical claim in *The Soldier and the State* was that American civil-military relations have been shaped by three variables: the external threat, which he called the functional imperative, and two components of what he called the societal imperative, "the social forces, ideologies and institutions dominant within the society."

The first component of the social imperative is the constitutional structure of the United States, the legal-institutional framework that guides political affairs generally and civil-military affairs specifically. The second is ideology, the prevailing worldview of a state. Huntington identified four ideologies—conservative pro-military, fascist pro-military, Marxist antimilitary, and liberal antimilitary—and argued that the fourth was the dominant ideology of the United States.

Huntington also argued that both components of the social imperative—the constitutional structure and the American ideology of antimilitary liberalism—had remained constant throughout U.S. history. Accordingly, the entire burden of explaining any change in civilian control or level of military armament would have to rest with the functional imperative; that is, the external threat.

He further contended that liberalism was "the gravest domestic threat to American military security. The tension between the demands of military security and the values of American liberalism can, in the long run, be relieved only by the weakening of the security threat or the weakening of liberalism." The requisite for military security is a shift in basic American values from liberalism to conservatism. Only an environment which is sympathetically conservative will permit American military leaders to combine the political power which society thrusts upon them with the military professionalism without which society cannot endure.

According to Huntington, America's antimilitary liberal ideology produces "extirpation"—the virtual elimination of military forces—when the external threat is low and "transmutation,"—the refashioning of the military in accordance with liberalism, which leads to the loss of "peculiarly military characteristics"—when the external threat is high. The problem for the United States in a protracted contest such as the Cold War (or the war against radical Islam) is that, while transmutation may work for short periods of time during which concentrated military effort is required (a world war, for example), it will not assure adequate military capability over the long term.

Samuel P. Huntington

CARL WALSH/AURORA / GETTY IMAGES

In the context of the Cold War, Huntington argued that the ideological component of America's societal imperative—liberal antimilitary ideology—would make it impossible to build the forces necessary to confront the functional imperative in the form of the Soviet threat to the United States and to permit military leaders to take the steps necessary to provide national security. The predictive element of Huntington's theory held that, without a change in the societal imperative, the United States would never be able to build the necessary military forces necessary to confront the Soviet Union.

The prescriptive or normative element of Huntington's theory was to suggest a way for the United States to deal with the dilemma raised by what Peter Feaver has called civil-military *problématique*: How to address the tension between the desire for civilian control and the need for military security, or how to minimize the power of the military and make civilian control more certain without sacrificing protection against external enemies.

In particular, Huntington argued that he was prescribing a means for enabling the liberal United States to effectively meet the Soviet threat without forfeiting civilian control. His prescription, which he called "objective civilian control," has the virtue of simultaneously maximizing military subordination and military fighting power. Objective control guarantees the protection of civilian society from external enemies and from the military themselves.

In Huntington's prescriptive or normative theory, the key to objective control is "the recognition of autonomous military professionalism," respect for the independent military sphere of action. Interference or meddling in military affairs undermines military professionalism and so undermines objective control.

This constitutes a bargain between civilians and soldiers. On the one hand, civilian authorities grant a professional officer corps autonomy in the realm of military affairs. On the other, "a highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state."

In other words, if the military is granted autonomy in its sphere, the result is a professional military that is politically neutral and voluntarily subordinate to civilian control. Of course, autonomy is not absolute: Huntington argued that while the military has responsibility for operational and tactical decisions, civilians must decide matters of policy and grand strategy.

While objective control weakens the military politically, rendering it politically sterile or neutral, it actually strengthens the military's ability to defend society. A professional military obeys civilian authority;

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a military that does not obey is not professional.

At the opposite pole from objective control lay Huntington's worst case situation—"subjective control"—which constituted a systematic violation of the autonomy necessary for a professional military and produced transmutation. He argued that subjective control was detrimental to military effectiveness and would lead to failure on the battlefield by forcing the military to defer to civilians in the military realm.

The key to objective control of the military is professionalism. According to Huntington's reading of American history, the origin of American military professionalism is to be found during the period following the Civil War. During this period, Huntington claimed, the military was isolated—not only physically, but also socially, politically, and intellectually—from the mainstream of American life.

Douglas MacArthur and Harry Truman, Wake Island, 1950

BETTMANN / CORBIS

Huntington writes that this period constituted the "dark ages" of the Army and the "period of stagnation" for the Navy. He quotes one officer to the effect that, in America, the United States Army had become "an alien army" existing in "practically complete separation from the lives of the people from which it [was] drawn." Huntington contends that the physical isolation of the armed services during this period was mirrored by its intellectual isolation: "The military were also divorced from the prevailing tides of intellectual opinion. West Point, for example, gradually lost contact with the rest of American education to which it has made such significant contributions, and went on its own way."

But although these years may have been the dark ages of the military, there was a positive outcome. The "isolation and rejection" of the military "made those years the most fertile, creative, and formative in the history of the American armed forces." This is because "the withdrawal of the military from civilian society produced the high standards of professional excellence essential to national success in the struggles of the twentieth century."

In other words, isolation acted as a crucible for the creation of a professional military.

As Peter Feaver has argued in his formidable challenge to Huntington, *Armed Servants*, Huntington's theory has survived numerous challenges over the decades. His core claims—that there is a meaningful difference between civilian and military roles; that the key to civilian control is military professionalism; and that the key to military professionalism is military autonomy—have been contested on numerous occasions. But Huntington perseveres "while the challengers drift into obscurity."

Why? To begin with, Huntington grounded his theory in a "deductive logic derived from democratic theory while his critics did not," writes Feaver. And despite the claims of many of those who look at civil-military relations through the lens of sociology, analytically distinct military and civilian spheres *do* appear to exist. Moreover, Huntington's theory is the source of what Eliot Cohen has called the "normal" theory of civil-military relations, which holds that, during wartime, civilians determine the goals of the war, then stand aside to let the military run the actual war.

The Soldier and the State has had a great and lasting effect within our uniformed military. Indeed, the military has come to endorse many of Huntington's general conclusions and has made it central to its civil-military relations education. But there are a number of flaws in Huntington's theory.

First, as Feaver points out, elegant as it may be, his theory doesn't fit the evidence of the Cold War. For instance, one of Huntington's testable hypotheses was that a liberal society (such as ours) would not produce sufficient military might to survive the Cold War. But the United States *did* prevail during the Cold War despite the fact that the country did not abandon liberalism. Indeed, "the evidence shows that American society as a whole almost certainly became even more individualistic and more anti-statist than when Huntington warned of the dangers of liberalism in 1957."

The same problems affect Huntington's prescriptive theory. During the Cold War, the military became more "civilianized," the officer corps more politicized, and civilians habitually intruded into the military realm: "According to many of the indicators Huntington cited as critical," writes Feaver, "civilians did not adopt the objective control mechanism he claimed was the crucial causal mechanism between the explanatory variable of ideology and the dependent variable of adequate national security."

Huntington's historical generalizations concerning the alleged isolation of the military during the late 19th century are also at odds with the evidence. For example, in a 1980 article for the journal of the Army War College, John Gates pointed out that Huntington had

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vastly overstated the physical isolation of the Army officer corps during the decades following the Civil War. Gates found that a significant number of officers served in or near large urban areas during this period and that there was much greater civil-military social intercourse than the conventional wisdom would suggest.

Using reports of the Army's adjutant general during 1867-97, Gates discovered that anywhere from "17 to 44 percent of all officers present for duty in established army command . . . were serving in the Department of the East or its equivalent, living in the most settled region of the United States, often on the Atlantic seaboard." Of those not serving in the East, a substantial proportion were serving in urban areas of significant size, including such cities as Chicago, Omaha, St. Paul, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, and San Francisco: "In a nation that numbered only 100 cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants in the 1880 census, many of the western cities in which officers found themselves were of significant size. One should not consider individuals posted to such locations isolated."

Gates went on to note that there were also a large number of officers on detached duty, which often included assignments that brought them into close contact with civilians, and that there was a great deal of social contact between officers and civilians. This contact between officers and civilians, including powerful and prestigious individuals, was a part of military life in both urban and frontier assignments. This is not surprising, given the middle-class origins of the officer corps. Huntington claimed that, because they were middle-class, officers were affiliated with no social group. On the contrary, argues Gates: They "had more in common with the ruling elite than with any other societal group in the nation."

Finally, the line of demarcation mandated by Huntington's theory is not as clear as some would have it. As Eliot Cohen has shown in *Supreme Command*, democratic war leaders such as Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln impinged upon the military's turf as a matter of course, influencing not only operations but also tactics. The reason that civilian leaders cannot leave the military to its own devices during war is that war is an iterative process involving the interplay of active wills. What appears to be the case at the outset of a war may change as the war continues, modifying the relationship between political goals and military means. Wars are not fought for their own purposes but to achieve policy goals set by the political leadership of the state.

There is also a practical problem arising from the military's reading of Huntington's theory. Contrary to the real conduct of war, officers often infer that military autonomy means they should be advocates of particular policies rather than simply serving in their traditional advisory role—indeed, that they have the right to *insist* that their advice be heeded by civilian authorities. Such an attitude among uniformed officers is hardly a recipe for healthy, balanced civil-military relations.

And yet, despite its flaws, *The Soldier and the State* continues to provide useful insights into the nature of civil-military relations, especially our own. Huntington's theoretical framework consists of a few tightly reasoned, deductive propositions. It addresses the central problem of civil-military relations: the relation of the military as an institution to civilian society. And its best empirical insights—the civilian-military distinction, the idea of military subordination, essential to democratic theory, the importance of military professionalism—do not depend on the problematic parts of Huntington's model.

Huntington was the first to attempt a systematic analysis of the civil-military *problématique*: the paradox arising from the fact that, out of fear of others, a society creates "an institution of violence" intended to protect it, but then fears that the institution will turn on society itself. That was very much on the minds of the Founding generation, which had to strike a balance between vigilance and responsibility. It is still on our minds. ♦

Cops and Robber

'American Gangster' and the underside of 1970s New York. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Frank Lucas, the title character of *American Gangster*, is a precise and controlled man. A Harlem kingpin in the late 1960s and early '70s, Lucas (Denzel Washington) dresses formally in quiet suits and ties, adheres to a rigorous schedule, provides stable employment for his family, is a hero in his neighborhood for providing community services, and lives with his mother. Lucas has become the most successful heroin dealer in New York, and is entirely invisible to the authorities. They are wedded to the idea that organized crime is the exclusive province of Italians, and that any black crook must be in the Mafia's employ.

American Gangster
Directed by Ridley Scott

Lucas prizes his low profile. He upbraids one of his brothers for tricking himself out like a pimp at a Harlem nightclub because a successful and powerful man does not need to stand out. One night, and only one night, Lucas fails to heed his own advice. He has just proposed

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to his girlfriend, Miss Puerto Rico, and she has presented him with a $50,000 chinchilla coat and hat to wear to the championship boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier.

Because of his showy gear and ringside seats, Lucas captures the attention of two police officers working in the area of drug enforcement. One is Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe), a Newark cop whose private life is as sloppy as Lucas's is disciplined but who won't take an illicit cent. The other is Trupo (Josh Brolin), a demonically dirty New York City cop who follows Lucas's limousine after his wedding, pulls it over and demands $10,000 a week in payoffs. Lucas arrives at his home, goes to his closet, and in front of his stricken wife, throws the chinchilla coat into the fire. His moment of flashy behavior has numbered his own days, and he knows it. But it won't be Trupo who brings Lucas down.

Beautifully detailed and masterfully acted, *American Gangster* is a thrilling throwback to the grungy, grimy, morally ambiguous New York crime movies of the 1970s, when revelations of police corruption seemed to offer some explanation for the city's rapid decline into a state of nature: *The good guys are working for the bad guys*. The visually meticulous Ridley Scott—whose credits include *Alien*, *Blade Runner*, and *Gladiator*—has long seemed the polar opposite of fast-working street-level directors like Sidney Lumet, whose *Serpico* and *Prince of the City* are the clear antecedents for *American Gangster*'s portrait of cops gone bad and the good cops who suffer because of the corruption of their colleagues.

Scott, whose last two films were the execrable *Kingdom of Heaven* and the unwatchable *A Good Year*, has found new life at the age of 70 by looking to the looser and more down-to-earth work of Lumet and others. The movie that seems to have had the most influence on Scott and screenwriter Steven Zaillian is an uncompromisingly tough and ugly B-picture from 1972 called *Across 110th Street*, whose classic theme song by Bobby Womack makes a welcome appearance on *American Gangster*'s soundtrack. In *Across 110th Street*, vicious cops led by Anthony Quinn, and soft Mafia scions led by Tony Franciosa, find themselves being challenged and superseded by a surging black underworld they cannot penetrate or control.

Russell Crowe, Denzel Washington

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

That is the same story Scott and Zaillian tell in *American Gangster*, which is a fictionalized portrait of an actual American gangster—a man named Frank Lucas who was, indeed, an importer and distributor of an exceptionally potent form of heroin. Lucas was decades younger at the time than Denzel Washington is now, and the real Lucas was exactly the kind of flamboyant player the Lucas of *American Gangster* so detests. But Washington, in collaboration with Scott and Zaillian, has come up with such an interesting character here that it hardly matters.

Washington's steely strength is beautifully complemented by the soft-spoken doggedness of Russell Crowe, himself fresh from committing hair-trigger acts of violence in *3:10 to Yuma* as brutal as the ones we see here from Frank Lucas. Crowe does another of his peerless vanishing acts into the part of a working-class Jewish boy from New Jersey who isn't entirely sure why he is incorruptible.

American Gangster is, at times, muddled and overstuffed. There are so many speaking parts filled by so many actors wearing so much 1970s facial hair that it is nearly impossible to keep track of just who anybody is. It is never made clear what anti-drug agency Crowe's Richie Roberts is working for—and in the movie's concluding scenes, Roberts suddenly transforms from a police detective into a district attorney without any explanation ever being given of the change in his circumstances.

And it was unwise for the creative team here to give Washington a couple of moments that are little more than plagiarized versions of bits in the two *Godfather* movies—as when Lucas suddenly flares up and screams about someone "shooting at my wife" in a patent replica of Michael Corleone's "in my home, in my bedroom, where my wife sleeps and my children come and play with their toys" rant in *The Godfather: Part II*. *American Gangster* is a very, very good movie, but it is in every way an inferior stepchild to the two greatest American gangster movies, which also happen to be the two greatest American movies and, what's more, the two greatest movies from any nation, ever.

Still, *American Gangster* pulses with life. It doesn't have a boring or tedious moment during its two-and-a-half hours, and when you're not watching Denzel Washington, you're watching Russell Crowe. You can't, in all honesty, ask for much more from a movie. ♦

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"The Dalai Lama is in Washington for a week of festivities. On Wednesday, he will receive the Congressional Gold Medal in a ceremony at the Capitol, and will later deliver a speech on the Capitol lawn. Mr. Bush will participate in the award ceremony, marking the first time he and the Dalai Lama will have appeared together in public during this visit. That has infuriated the Chinese, who on Tuesday warned the United States not to honor the Dalai Lama, saying it would have 'an extremely serious impact' on relations between the United States and China."

—New York Times, *October 17, 2007*

York Times

deniers. It's WARM out the

ESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2007

ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

CHINA TO HOST SUMMIT OF WORLD'S TOP VILLAINS

Rebuking Bush, Beijing Invites Castro, Chávez, Lex Luthor

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

BEIJING, Oct. 30 — Following the Dalai Lama's much-publicized trip to Washington, his photographed meeting with President Bush, and his acceptance of the Congressional Gold Medal, the Chinese government has announced it will convene its own meetings with leaders critical of the White House. They include, among others, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, North Korea's Kim Jong-Il, Russian president Vladimir Putin, and wealthy industrialist Alexander "Lex" Luthor.

Last week, Chinese diplomats warned the Bush administration of "an extremely serious impact" on relations stemming from the Tibetan spiritual leader's visit. Now, says Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, "you will see how it feels to be on the opposite end of the bamboo stick. The sharpened end."

Besides the aforementioned leaders, the Beijing government has also invited Syrian strongman Bashar Assad, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Italian-American entrepreneur Emilio Barzini, Major Heinrich Strasser, Grand Moff Tarkin, and convicted felon Jack Napier, whom Jiechi calls "a real joker." The foreign minister was quick to note these were just a few of the many invitees (only Sean Penn is confirmed), adding "there are so many distinguished people who are united in their hatred of the White House that they can form a legion. Of doom!"

A tentative schedule of events for this summit, whose working title is "The World Is Not Enough," includes panel discussions and breakout sessions on nuclear proliferation (and how to encourage it), and increasingly unpredictable weather (and how to unleash it). China's president, Hu Jintao, expressed hope that the countersummit "would make Mr. Bush think twice before welcoming such unsavory characters as the Dalai Lama." But the Chinese president was also optimistic that real progress would be made, such as the construction of a new space station called the Death

Continued on Page A10

Emma Delhaas for Worldwide Image

Industrialist Lex Luthor confers with President Hu Jintao over China's plans.

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First Dumbledore, Now McGonagall: 'She Hated Wands'

LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

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